

# **Form to Incorporate Interagency Function**

**A Monograph  
by  
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## **Abstract**

SINE QUA NON: EXPANDING THE OPERATIONAL ART FORM TO INCORPORATE INTERAGENCY FUNCTION by MAJ (P) John D. Highfill, U.S. Army, 59 pages.

This paper provides a critical analysis and assessment of interagency-Department of Defense (DOD) support during combat operations, specifically stability operations during or post-conflict. The general reluctance of the Department of Defense to conduct stability operations combined with the still-inadequate capabilities of the civilian agencies and departments to support a whole of government approach to modern warfare reveal tenets for improved efficacy of the stability enterprise in conflict areas. During combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, organizational, best practices, and educational elements combined to provide the fundamentals for improving the whole of government approach to stability operations. This paper synthesizes multiple reports, documents and a case study of stability operations in the War on Terror to develop recommendations for improving the interagency-DOD integration and performance for future contingency operations.

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*Pia Fidelis*

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	iii
Acknowledgements .....	iv
Table of Contents .....	v
Introduction .....	1
Stability and Reconstruction Programs: The Other War .....	6
Father of PRT: CORDS.....	6
Birth of the PRT in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century War on Terror.....	13
Entrance of the Iraq PRT and embedded PRT concept .....	20
National Strategic Guidance and Policy in Iraq .....	24
National Strategies: Executive Guidance .....	25
National Strategies: Departmental Guidance .....	26
National Strategies: DOS: Straw man as Primary Implementing Partner .....	29
Operations in Iraq: PRT/ePRT 2005-2009 .....	34
Operational Art: OPA and PRT-Baghdad .....	34
Case Study: EPRT 5 Implementing Strategic Policy .....	37
RAND Study: Interagency Operational Efficacy Reviewed .....	43
Recommendations .....	47
Conclusion.....	50
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	52

## Introduction

Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team (EPRT5), formed in August 2007, served in the northern part of the Baghdad province in support of the second brigade, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Stryker brigade combat team (SBCT) from 2008 to 2009. EPRT5 acted as an extension of the larger Provincial Reconstruction Team-Baghdad (PRT-B), in tandem with Multi-National Division-Baghdad. Initially fielded with one senior US State department Foreign Service team leader and a deputy Foreign Service officer from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the team ultimately expanded to include several civil affairs and reserve component military officers. Team membership evolved from a primarily military organization into a primarily civilian one, with only two military members remaining 12 months after formation of the EPRT. The expanded civilian composition of the team, still led by a state department official, now with military personnel in only the deputy team leader and the military administrative officer positions, reflected part of the USG national strategy for the “New Way Forward” (or “surge”).<sup>1</sup>

The experiences of the military deputy to this state department-led, multi-agency EPRT form the basis for the recommendations found in this paper. The military deputy’s primary responsibilities centered on establishing a coherent and productive mission set for the team while integrating the efforts of civilians with disparate expertise levels, in conjunction with the US State Department team leader’s support to the brigade’s overall mission. The military deputy role developed into a civil-military integrator for the team, brigade, and at times, dealt with the operational level Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of State (DOS) offices. In order to accomplish this, the deputy searched for guidance from a wide range of sources to organize the team, study the issues, determine courses of action, and finally execute and assess the work of

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<sup>1</sup> Highlights of the Iraq Strategy, National Security Council, January 2007, “The Whitehouse Website,” under “The New Way Forward in Iraq” <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/iraq/2007/iraq-strategy011007.pdf> (accessed on December 2, 2009).



this civil-military team. Initially, vague or limited articulation from the operational level seemed prevalent, including the US Embassy-Iraq (USEMB-I), Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I), Multi-National Force-Corps (MNC-I) and the operational/tactical level of Multi-National Division-Baghdad (MND-B) and Provisional Reconstruction Team –Baghdad (PRT-B) on essential governance, reconstruction, and civil capacity program or policy implementation.<sup>2</sup>

Interagency activity and programs were prolific in Baghdad, but rarely benefited from detailed coordination, coherent structure, or unity of effort between US civilian and military forces, down to the EPRT-brigade level.<sup>3</sup> Integration across the USAID, US Department of Agriculture (USDA), DOS, and DOD-sponsored entities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that coordinated budget execution and intergovernmental level planning presented challenges for establishing sustainable, coherent programs that related to overall strategic or operational aims.<sup>4</sup> Developing EPRT level work plans nested with the DOS ‘Maturity Model’ or division/PRT level Unified Common Plan (UCP) occurred both simultaneously and sequentially, but rarely in a discrete, coordinated effort between commands. Discovering cross-purpose capabilities and actions in U.S. sponsored programs that should, but did not, mutually reinforce each other became the focus of integration on the ‘non-lethal’ aspects of counter insurgency in northern Baghdad at the operational/tactical level. This paper reviews and assesses historical

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<sup>2</sup> Combat Studies Institute, “Operational Leadership Experiences Project: Interview with Major John Dale Highfill, January 27, 2010,” [http://cgsc.cdmhost.com/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/p4013coll13&CISOPTR=1769](http://cgsc.cdmhost.com/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/p4013coll13&CISOPTR=1769) (accessed March 16, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Scott F. Donahue and Daniel L. Higgins, “Building Civil Capacity in Iraq,” *Engineer* 39, (May-August 2009), <http://www.wood.army.mil/engrmag/PDFs%20for%20May-Aug%2009/Donahue.pdf> (accessed March 16, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Quy H. Nguyen, “Achieving Unity Of Effort: Leveraging Interagency Cooperation Between The Department Of Defense (DOD) And The United States Agency For International Development (USAID)” (master’s thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, 2009), 54-57, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA502419&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf> (accessed March 21, 2010).

tactical implementation of operational/strategic policy to identify options for improving efficacy in future interagency operational activities.

The United States Government (USG) interest in the formation of tailored programs to stabilize regional populations after conflict has been accepted canon since implementation of the European Recovery Program (Marshall Plan) in post-WWII Europe and in accordance with Hague Convention IV.<sup>5</sup> However, conducting these programs and concepts *during* conflict adds a new dimension that incorporates dynamics of nation-state interests, political-social ideologies of multiple actors, and economic aspects that “whole of government” programs attempt to address. Although parallels exist between post-WWII reconstruction in Europe and stability efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the similarities are broad at best.<sup>6</sup>

The Allies sought to re-establish stability in post-WWII Europe through economic recovery and reestablishment of governance. Current U.S. strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan shares similar aims. Strong national unity and other positive cultural factors, enhanced by the efforts of competent government personnel (U.S. and European) facilitated the transition and subsequent successes in Europe, whereas few such factors exist in the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the ongoing conflicts represent the current example of stabilization through reconstruction and recovery efforts, similar to the Marshall plan in concept, with the added reality of concurrent, low-intensity conflict. Long-term stability in Europe combined all the

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<sup>5</sup> Diane B. Kunz, “Marshall Plan Commemorative Section: The Marshall Plan Reconsidered: A Complex of Motives,” *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 3 (May/Jun 1997): 162, 167-170; Art. 43. The authority of the legitimate power having in fact passed into the hands of the occupant, the latter shall take all the measures in his power to restore, and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country, International Committee of the Red Cross, “Convention (IV), respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land. The Hague, 18 October 1907,” under “SECTION III: MILITARY AUTHORITY OVER THE TERRITORY OF THE HOSTILE STATE,” <http://www.icrc.org/IHL.NSF/FULL/195?OpenDocument> (accessed November 17, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Nicolaus Mills, “The Last Page,” *Dissent* 54, no. 4, (Fall 2007): 112.

<sup>7</sup> Amitai Etzioni, “Reconstruction: A Damaging Fantasy?” *Military Review* 88, no. 6 (November-December 2008): 113; Mills, 112.

forces of good governance, economic discipline, and a US military-diplomatic presence that exists to this day.

The former antagonists in post-World War II Europe shared similar goals, but frustration resulted from American efforts to impose their own form of democracy and social structures in Germany.<sup>8</sup> The post-war relationship between the USG and Western Europe fully matured after Secretary of State George Marshall's Harvard commencement speech of June 1947, in which he called for U.S. sponsored aid to Europe.<sup>9</sup> Today, similar strategic challenges exist in establishing cooperation between the USG and the governments of Iraq and Afghanistan to achieve stabilization in these countries. These challenges remain despite accomplishments like the recent Status of Forces Agreement/Strategic Framework Agreement (SOFA/SFA) between Iraq and the USG.<sup>10</sup>

The SFA is the essential document that establishes the foundation for long-term stability in the country and region. It rests on two critical elements imbedded in its eleven sections. The first of these elements is the integrated, functioning federal government of Iraq (from sub-provincial through provincial and finally to Ministerial/Executive levels). The second element is the development of a currently undefined security cooperation plan that relies on the long-term

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<sup>8</sup> John Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany: Politics and the Military, 1945-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), 130, 148, 163-168, 237-244.

<sup>9</sup> John G. Ikenberry, "Rethinking the Origins of American Hegemony," *Political Science Quarterly* 104, no. 3 (Autumn 1989): 375-381, 387-389; Derek Chollet and James M. Goldgeier, "The Faulty Premises of the Next Marshall Plan," *The Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (Winter 2005-2006): 7-9; John D. Drolet, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Afghanistan Vs. Iraq – Should We Have A Standard Model?" (Strategy Research Project, US Army War College, 2006), 2.

<sup>10</sup> Whitehouse Archives, "Strategic Framework Agreement for a Relationship of Friendship and Cooperation Between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq, 2008" [http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/iraq/SE\\_SFA.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/iraq/SE_SFA.pdf) (accessed November 28, 2009).; Whitehouse Archives, "Agreement between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq on the Withdrawal of United States of America Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities during Their temporary Presence in Iraq," commonly known as a Status of Forces Agreement, or SOFA, [http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/iraq/SE\\_SOFA.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/iraq/SE_SOFA.pdf), (accessed November 28, 2009); Andrew J. Birtle, "Persuasion and Coercion in Counterinsurgency Warfare," *Military Review* 88, no. 4 (July-August 2008): 52.

efficacy of the first.<sup>11</sup> Operational level direction for tactical civil-military employment is not apparent in the underlying developmental strategies or policies alluded to in the SFA. The expected desultory nature of the SFA with Iraq puts the legal agreements with the USG in a more advanced, mature nation-to-nation relationship than with Afghanistan, but strategic vision detached from operational direction is difficult to implement. Strategic vision promotes effective operational level activity when deliberate language outlines the future relationship between tactical actions and strategic reframing opportunities. Strategic stakeholders provide venue and impetus for discourse with the operational leadership through a strategic lens, rather than relying solely on metric-based technical reports on discrete, tactical subjects.

The following analysis will define the problematic situation of policy implementation at the operational and tactical levels in Iraq, and recommend possible approaches to address concurrent and post-conflict situations. This paper begins with understanding operational direction and linkages through a review of related civil-military institutions, one from Vietnam era, and one from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF). The historical review includes the policy behind these institutions and concepts, assessing the relevant tactical outcomes as related to successful procedures that enhance both military success and interagency effectiveness. The genesis of these institutions and concepts forms the basis of the interactive nature of national level strategy and operational aptitude during stability operations in interagency organizations.

Next, the paper will analyze the relationship between the national level strategic underpinnings of stability operations. Synthesis of national level strategic documents, to include USG departmental documents, reveals the strategic-operational reciprocity that emerges through observed deliberate or variable tactical outcomes. The relationship between the strategic and operational levels during stability operations is much more significant than in other forms of

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<sup>11</sup> Strategic Framework Agreement, 3,7.

conflict; imprecise operational direction yields tactical actions that can adversely influence strategic aim.<sup>12</sup>

The paper concludes by reviewing operational and tactical level policy implementation and actions in Operation Iraqi Freedom specific to civil capacity building in stability operations. A case study of an EPRT mission demonstrates the challenges of strategic policy implementation at the tactical level. Observations from this analysis, combined with elements of a RAND study concerning interagency efficacy provide insight to improving operational linkages for USG activities. Synthesis of this material, specifically the Rand study findings concerning integrating instruments of national power and applicable recommendations for the theater (operational) and field (tactical) level emerge in this paper.<sup>13</sup> The conclusion ends with recommendations for operational level improvements to support strategic vision and policy.

## **Stability and Reconstruction Programs: The Other War**

### **Father of PRT: CORDS**

By 1966 the separation and degree of emphasis on the military war were so great that President Johnson, to give pacification more attention, began to speak of it as “the other war.”<sup>14</sup>

America possesses a long and varied history of efforts to influence policy in foreign lands. However, the Vietnam War provides a particularly relevant case study for the purposes of analyzing current stability efforts in Iraq and, potentially, future efforts abroad. Protracted conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan (also characterized by complex, problematic social-economic-political issues) have their true USG managerial roots in the pacification strategy of Vietnam. The

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<sup>12</sup> N.M. Vego, “Systems versus Classical Approach to Warfare,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 52, (1st quarter 2009): 45.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Edwards Hunter, Edward Gnehm, and George Joulwan, *Integrating instruments of power and influence : lessons learned and best practices* (Arlington, VA: RAND, 2008), viii-ix.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas W. Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1982), 4.

inclusion of US civilian experts modified the military pacification strategy in Vietnam by the insertion of capability through a civil capacity-building concept called the CORDS program (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support) in 1967, and to a lesser extent, the earlier USMC Combined Action Programs (CAP).<sup>15</sup> A brief overview of the CORDS program, as the more direct lineal forebear of EPRT and PRTs, illustrates the common threads of USG nation-building efforts from Vietnam to the present day, and reveals the underpinnings of the mismatch between strategy and tactical policy implementation in Iraq and Afghanistan. CORDS itself grew out of the earlier, narrowly focused civilian chain of command in charge of all non-military operations called the Office of Civil Operations (OCO) with Deputy Ambassador William Porter in the lead.<sup>16</sup>

The impetus to integrate the civilian agencies within the military framework that appeared in the 9 May 1967 National Security Action Memorandum 362 originated from President Johnson himself, when he appointed a member of his national security council, Mr. Robert W. Komer, to both ambassadorial rank and deputy to General Westmoreland, Commander, US Military Assistance Command-Vietnam (COMUSMACV or MACV).<sup>17</sup> This executive order did two extraordinary things. First, it clearly placed one civilian leader in charge of all non-military operations (except USAID land reform program) for pacification and development, and gave that civilian leader direct access to the senior military commander, who

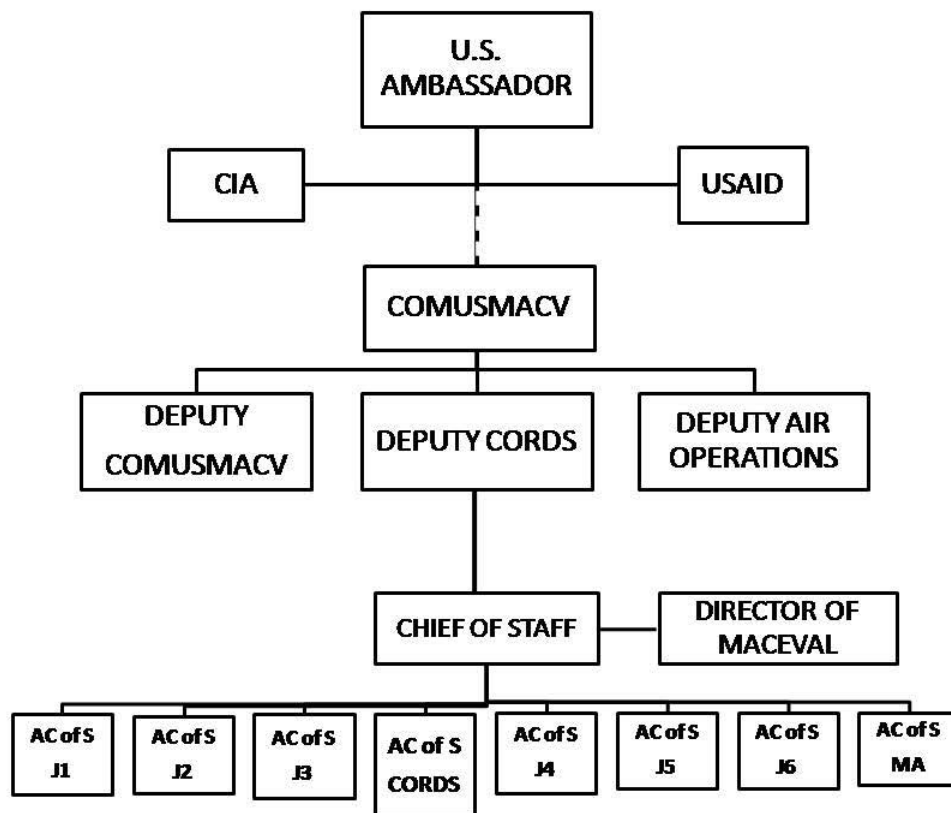
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<sup>15</sup> Curtis L. Williamson III, "The US Marine Corps Combined Action Program (CAP): A Proposed Alternative Strategy for the Vietnam War" (Monograph, USMC CSC, Quantico, 2002): 2, 17-27, 36,37. CAP platoons lived with their military counterparts and among local villagers, generally consisting of one USMC squad and one Vietnamese platoon. Their cohabitation assured the villagers of their security, allowing relations between these two diverse cultures to develop. Primarily focused on combat operations, local governance and rule of law were also elements of this civil-military solution in Vietnam; Lawrence A. Yates, *The US Military's Experience in Stability Operations, 1789-2005: Global War on Terrorism Occasional Paper 15* (Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 2005), 17.

<sup>16</sup> Dale Andrade and Lieutenant Colonel James H. Willbanks, "CORDS/Phoenix: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam for the Future," *Military Review* 86, no.2 (March-April 2006): 13.

<sup>17</sup> Major Ross Coffey, "Revisiting CORDS: The Need for Unity of Effort to Secure Victory in Iraq," *Military Review* 86, no. 2 (March-April 2006): 28.

was also the only individual from whom he received direction. Second, it made the military responsible for the execution of the inter-agency mandate.<sup>18</sup> Ambassador Komer's civilian equivalent rank of three-star general made him a co-equal to his fellow deputy military commander, Lieutenant General Creighton Abrams (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1. COMUSMACV, CORDS, and the US Mission Organization in Vietnam.**<sup>19</sup>

The president's wording on 'Inter-agency' support was clear and went beyond mere cooperation or collaboration; it demanded full support and put all jurisdictions under the purview

<sup>18</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies: Guerrillas and Their Opponents since 1750* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 200.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas W. Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1982), 58.

of the Ambassador to Vietnam for interagency issues.<sup>20</sup> The new deputy for CORDS (the DEPCORDS) created a complementary staff to the MACV staff, to include creation of subordinate civilian ‘corps commanders’ in the four regions of Vietnam, comparable to the existing military corps commanders, along with provincial and sub-provincial teams, with a mix of almost three military personnel to each civilian. The larger 44 provincial teams and 4 man sub-provincial (district) teams numbered 7,601 personnel by September 1969 (only 1137 were civilians).<sup>21</sup>

Tactical unity of effort and command achievement yielded positive results as a direct result of this parallel senior civilian and military command arrangement. A key area often overlooked in interagency cooperation is the ability to counsel and rate subordinates to influence positive outcomes in performance; this was an area addressed by the CORDS program, which is notably missing from today’s PRT structure.<sup>22</sup> Along with the effective separation of the Vietcong from the populace, developmental programs, and locally improved economic situations, the CORDS program achieved these local, tactical efforts with impressive unity of effort, even by twenty-first century standards. Protecting the populace (by living with and engaging the populace along multiple security-economic-governance lines) proved effective counter-insurgency field-craft. The credibility of the South Vietnamese central government in the rural areas improved somewhat, however, a holistic governance program for all of South Vietnam, employing this bottom-up, USG interagency effort, never emerged.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Lyndon B. Johnson Library and Museum Website, “National Security Action Memorandum 362: Responsibility for US Role in Pacification (Revolutionary Development 1967),” <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/NSAMs/nsam362.asp> (accessed November 17, 2009).

<sup>21</sup> Dale Andrade and Lieutenant Colonel James H. Willbanks, 16.

<sup>22</sup> Mitchell J. Thompson, “CORDS: A Lesson in True Interagency Cooperation,” *Foreign Service Journal* 83, no. 3 (March 2006): 71.

<sup>23</sup> Dale Andrade and Lieutenant Colonel James H. Willbanks, 14-16, 22; Coffey, 32.



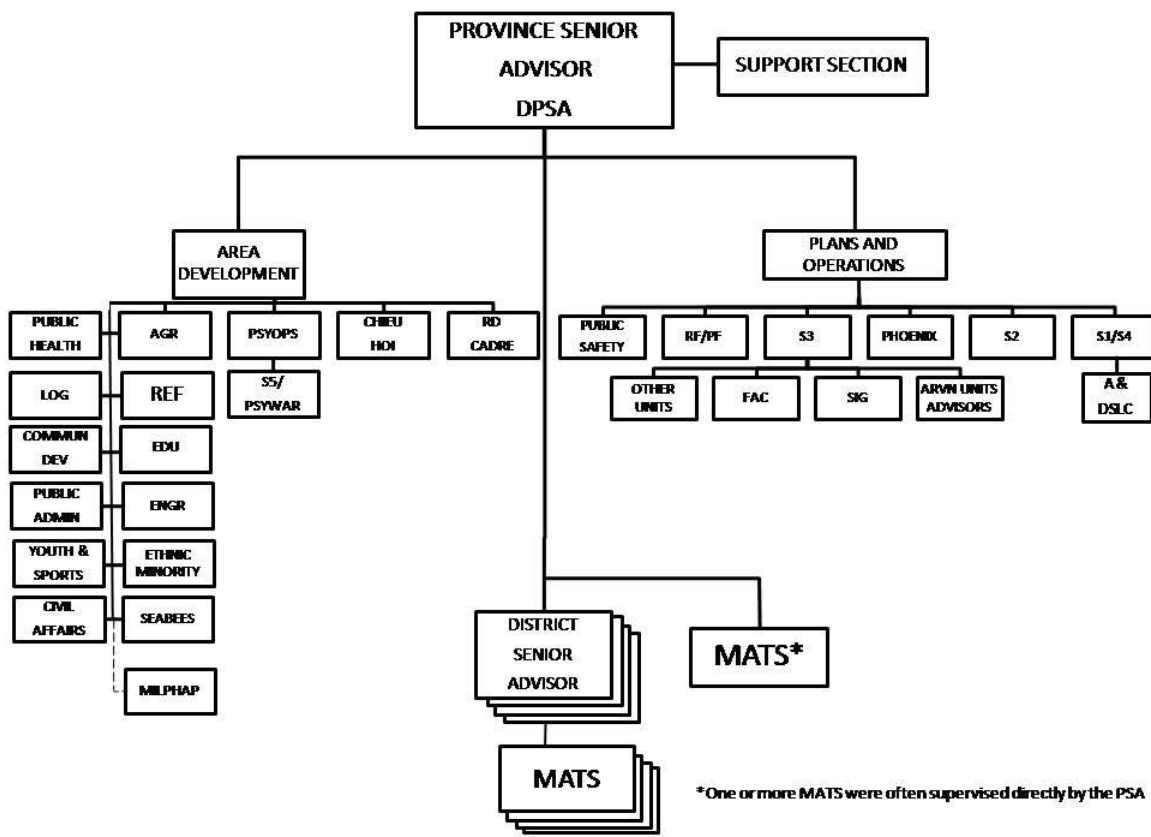


Figure 2. CORDS organizational structure at the provincial level in Vietnam.<sup>24</sup>

This unprecedented civil-military unification in the USG noticeably lacked a complementary strategy that addressed a strong, multi-layered Vietnamese governance program . The acknowledged mismatch and de-synchronization between the military and civilian agencies solution set occurred at the operational level in MACV, however the real results occurred primarily at the individual provincial levels, with a unifying strategy between the local people and central government never materializing. In the end, no such strategy and accompanying policy emerged that could remain effective after the departure of both the conventional USG military forces and the CORDS program and overcome the North Vietnamese offensive in 1975.<sup>25</sup> Combined with the negative political discourse that had developed over a period of years in the

<sup>24</sup> Andrade and Willbanks, 15.

<sup>25</sup> Beckett, 200.

United States Congress and population, cutting of funds to the South Vietnamese government was the final blow.<sup>26</sup>

These political actions, however, revealed a developing fundamental shortcoming in U.S. policymaking: the congressional and executive branch stakeholders could not simultaneously integrate all elements of national power.<sup>27</sup> Interagency efforts, exceptional by most accounts, lacked the design, resources, and authority to extend beyond their tactical mandate. No policy or program connected, enhanced, or protected the progress at the provincial level to the national level under the umbrella of a combined USG-South Vietnamese strategy.<sup>28</sup> However, the United States' twenty-first century conflicts present the opportunity for the USG to replicate the real success of the post-conflict Marshal Plan in Europe through the proximate successes of the CORDS program in 1967-1972 Vietnam.<sup>29</sup> This key difference in the Post-WWII Europe and the Vietnamese reconstruction efforts is the fact that the latter took place in the midst of an ongoing conflict pacification effort, much like the realities of today's ongoing operations.<sup>30</sup> This difference is significant; both in the political characteristics of the nations involved and in the level of interagency coordination required for achievement of complementary strategic goals.

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<sup>26</sup> Birtle, 51.

<sup>27</sup> Project on National Security Reform, "Forging a New Shield, Part III, Assessment of System Performance, Executive Summary: November 2008," <http://pnssr.org/web/page/682/sectionid/579/pagelevel/2/interior.asp>, ii (accessed November 14, 2009).

<sup>28</sup> Austin Long, *On "Other War" Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research*, (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2006). 25, 29-33; Jacob Kipp, Lester Grau, Karl Prinslow, and Captain Don Smith, "The Human Terrain System: A CORDS for the 21st Century," *Military Review* 86, no. 5 (September-October 2006), 10; Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell IV and Lieutenant Colonel Steven M. Leonard, "Field Manual 3-07, Stability Operations: Upshifting The Engine Of Change," *Military Review* 88, no. 4 (July-August 2008): 3.

<sup>29</sup> Christel Fonzo-Eberhard et al., *Civilian Surge: Key to Complex Operations*, ed. Hans Binnendijk and Patrick M. Cronin (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2008), 1.

<sup>30</sup> Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell IV and Lieutenant Colonel Steven M. Leonard, "Field Manual 3-07, Stability Operations: Upshifting The Engine Of Change," *Military Review* 88, no. 4 (July-August 2008): 7; Etzioni, 113,114.

The real success of CORDS existed at the US operational and tactical-administrative level, particularly in interagency integration and implementation of development programs, local economic and governance operations, and other elements of Counterinsurgency (COIN); however, CORDS failed to achieve the same success at the strategic level due to the lack of synergy required to enable true policy implementation. Likewise, although admirable, the interagency cooperation effort occurred sequentially to military action, with ultimate integration occurring only after significant expenditure of blood and treasure. A painful realization emerged from the failure to develop a sustainable, credible, and unassailable form of governance (that spanned from local to national level), made apparent only two years after the 1973 Paris Peace Accords by the successful North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam.<sup>31</sup> The unprecedented interagency integration achieved during American operations in Vietnam, led by a single civilian deputy to the MACV, facilitated clear unity of command and effort and ensured availability of dedicated resourcing for operations, yet the U.S. policy failed to provide an overall strategy for a sustainable South Vietnamese government.

The lessons one can draw from the CORDS experience address issues American personnel experience today in the war on terror: security of the population is vital and further separation of the insurgent from the population is best achieved through programs and processes aimed at *culturally relevant* economic development, rule of law, and legitimate governance. These COIN and stability related efforts emerge from two integral elements. The first key element: complete integration and unity of effort between USG military and civilian developmental agencies facilitated directly by clear guidance from the President of the United States (POTUS). The second key element entails the direct cooperation and engagement with the

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<sup>31</sup> Project on National Security Reform, "CORDS and the Vietnam Experience: An Interagency Organization for Counterinsurgency and Pacification" under "Reports," <http://pnsr.org/web/page/652/sectionid/579/pagelevel/2/interior.asp>, 81 (accessed November 14, 2009).

indigenous people by those elements, and, at all practicable levels, on a day-to-day basis.<sup>32</sup> A third key element, however, failed to emerge from the CORDS effort. The USG needed to unify civilian and military efforts between strategic and tactical level commands *simultaneously*, not *sequentially*, and this unity required accompaniment by the same close cooperation with the host nation under a bi-lateral strategic governance framework, supported by the U.S. Congress in the early stages of the conflict. This third key element remained absent throughout the conflict.<sup>33</sup> Ironically, the very success of CORDS at the tactical level allowed President Johnson, and later, President Nixon, to neglect this vital executive level delegation of authority, resulting in the ultimate abandonment of the success achieved by 1972.<sup>34</sup>

### **Birth of the PRT in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century War on Terror**

Thirty years later, resurrected elements of the CORDS program appeared during the US involvement in Afghanistan in 2002 essentially resuming where they had ended at the unofficial doctrinal endpoint of the CORDS program in 1972. After the successful tactical defeat of the Taliban in 2001, a concerted effort to rebuild and stabilize the nation emerged in a more limited interagency fashion, notably without an equivalent civilian deputy at the highest level of command in Afghanistan. Additionally, an unofficial, ‘co-equal’ status between military and civilian members grew from the provisional Joint Regional Teams (JRTs) to Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), although neither the military nor civilians exerted actual

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<sup>32</sup> Coffey, 26-30.

<sup>33</sup> Birtle, 51-52; Project on National Security Reform, “Forging a New Shield, Part III, Assessment of System Performance, Executive Summary (November 2008),” <http://pnsr.org/web/page/682/sectionid/579/pagelevel/2/interior.asp>, ii (accessed on December 3, 2009); “It is not enough for the government to set political goals, to determine how much military force is applicable, to enter into alliances or to break them; politics becomes an active instrument of operation.” David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, (St. Petersburg: Greenwood Press, 1964), 9.

<sup>34</sup> Project on National Security Reform, “Forging a New Shield Report: Project on National Security Reform (November 2008),” [http://www.pnsr.org/data/files/pnsr\\_forging\\_a\\_new\\_shield\\_report.pdf](http://www.pnsr.org/data/files/pnsr_forging_a_new_shield_report.pdf), 73 (accessed on December 3, 2009).

‘command’ over one another. For example, no efficiency reports are required between PRT co-leaders or subordinates.<sup>35</sup> The Afghan PRTs consist of 60-100 personnel, heavily military, similar to its CORDS program antecedents, with around 40 personnel dedicated to team security alone. On most teams, only a few individuals represented the civilian components of DOS and USAID, along with USDA and other contracted DOS specialists (this situation existed through 2009).<sup>36</sup> These Afghan PRTs were co-located with coalition units, generally at the brigade level, with PRT leadership coming from Army, and later, Air Force or Navy personnel.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, non-US led PRTs operate inside of Afghanistan, with some key differences in areas including project construction, local vs. central governance emphasis, team membership skills, and relationship with NGOs.<sup>38</sup> The general principles of both types of teams vary slightly, but the primary structure and mission of the US PRTs remains the focus of this analysis.

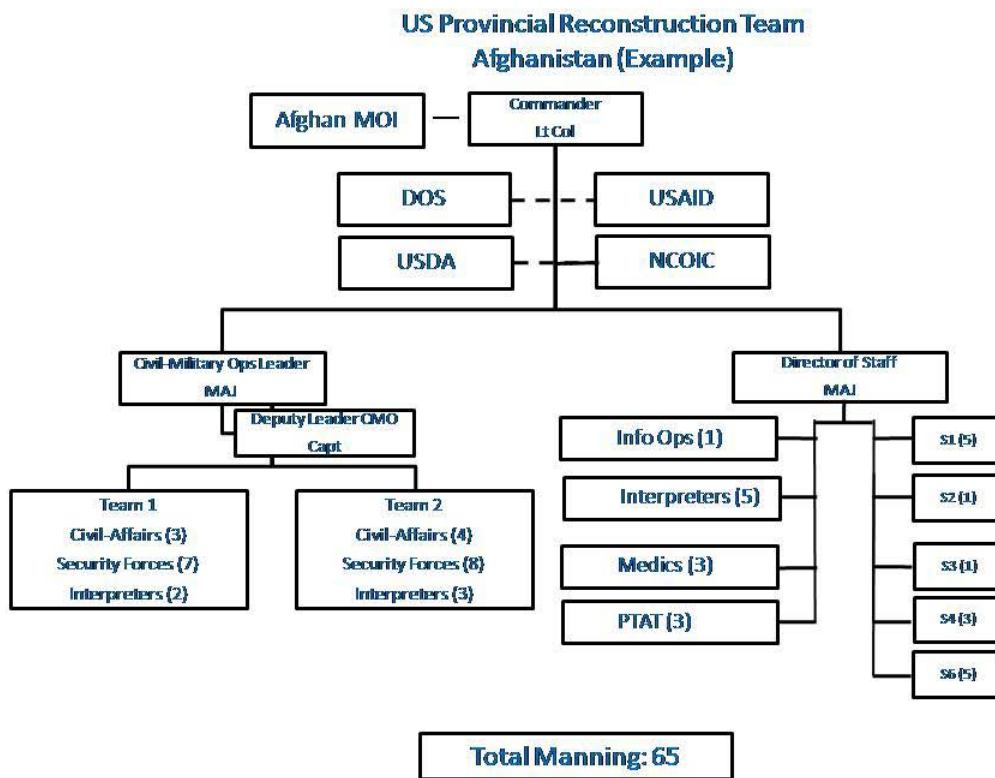
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<sup>35</sup> Stewart Patrick and Kaysie Brown, “The Pentagon and Global Development: Making Sense of the DoD’s Expanding Role” (Working Paper Number 131, Center for Global Development, 2007), 5; John D. Drolet, “Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Afghanistan Vs. Iraq – Should We Have A Standard Model?” (Strategy Research Project, US Army War College, 2006), 4,5; Sean W. McCaffrey, “Provincial Reconstruction Teams In Regional Command-East (Operation Enduring Freedom-VIII)” (Strategy Research Project, US Army War College, 2009), 8.

<sup>36</sup> House Committee on Armed Services, *Agency Stovepipes vs. Strategic Agility: Lessons We Need to Learn from Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan: April 2008*, 110<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 2008, [http://armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/Reports/PRT\\_Report.pdf](http://armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/Reports/PRT_Report.pdf), 13-16, (accessed November 18, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> Carter Malkasian and Gerald Meyerle, “Provincial Reconstruction Teams: How Do We Know They Work?” (Monograph, US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2009), 2-8; Robert Borders, “Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: A Model for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development,” *Journal of Development and Social Transformation* 1, (2004): 7-9; Drolet, 4-6; Sean C. McLay, “Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) – A Panacea for What Ails Iraq” (Monograph, Air War College, 2007), 6.

<sup>38</sup> McLay, 8-10.



**Figure 3. US PRT Organizational structure at the provincial level in Afghanistan.**<sup>39</sup>

The Afghan (US) PRTs enjoy a relatively reasonable level of success, but as of this writing, military leadership continues, along with overwhelmingly military staffing. Ironically, the Afghan PRT structure strongly resembles their CORDS forebears a generation earlier.<sup>40</sup> Reconstruction and stability work in the PRTs also remain relatively successful at the tactical level, even without the operationally successful melding of interagency efforts characteristic of previous CORDS organizations. Integration of strategic policies with tactical outputs occurs in name only; the strategic policy invariably becomes focused on immediate improvised tactical objectives, such as normal USAID developmental work or coalition force use of localized

<sup>39</sup> McLay, 6.

<sup>40</sup> Long, 61; Mick Ryan, “The Military and Reconstruction Operations”, *Parameters* 37 (Winter 2007-08): 60-67; McLay, iii.

Commanders Emergency Response Funds (CERP) for decidedly non-strategic or operational matters.<sup>41</sup> Metrics exist at the strategic level to measure tactical success; however, the required local tailoring of mission sets relies in great part on the social, political, and economic expertise of PRT team members. This results in specific tactical developmental programs that provide specific metrics for measuring success, but does not necessarily result in tactical programs that support strategic goals.<sup>42</sup> Austin Long, in his 2006 study of five decades of COIN, produced for the Secretary of Defense, called for a *National* Reconstruction Team to fill this operational gap between the strategic and tactical levels.<sup>43</sup> Mr. Long describes the Vietnam-era relationship between combatant commander, country ambassador and the theater commander, contrasted with the model today in OIF and OEF, and they are virtually identical.<sup>44</sup> In both cases, a national level or operational/strategic level entity does not exist for a holistic, whole of government approach. The void then, as now, is filled with strategic-oriented personnel or offices with interagency working groups (Ambassadors, MNF-I /MNF-A commanders, the S/CRS, OPA), but no stand-alone office that provides operational-level integration of strategic goals and tactical actions, or ensures specific, streamlined interagency efficiencies built by the DEPCORDS/CORDS

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<sup>41</sup> Vincent M. Dreyer, "Retooling The Nation-Building Strategy In Afghanistan" (Monograph, US Army War College, 2006), 3; Andrew G. Wilcox, "Provisional Reconstruction Teams: An Operational Imperative" (Monograph, US Naval War College, 2007), 18.

<sup>42</sup> The stated strategic goals in Afghanistan are as follows:

- 1) never again a safe haven for terrorists and is a reliable, stable ally in the War on Terror.
- 2) moderate and democratic, with a thriving private sector economy;
- 3) capable of governing its territory and borders; and
- 4) respectful of the rights of all its citizens.

US Department of Defense, Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan Report to Congress in accordance with the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (Section 1230, Public Law 110-181), 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1st sess., (Washington, DC, January 2009), 15; Malkasian and Meyerle, 31-40; Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), Quarterly Report to the US Congress, April 30, 2009, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1st sess., (Washington, DC, January 2009), [http://www.sigir.mil/reports/QuarterlyReports/Apr09/pdf/Report\\_-\\_April\\_2009.pdf](http://www.sigir.mil/reports/QuarterlyReports/Apr09/pdf/Report_-_April_2009.pdf) (accessed November 18, 2009): 112.

<sup>43</sup> Long, 60.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 60.

programs. Mr. Long does not expand on this entity into the operational role, but the positioning of such an office at the national level for action and policy making at the operational/tactical (civil-military) level suggests a high level of efficacy is possible.

Although strategic goals do exist, the implementation of PRTs focuses on the local through the provincial level, making synchronization of local PRT efforts and strategic goals problematic. Afghanistan PRT efforts, following closely in the footsteps of the CORDS program, almost to exacting standards, is similar to the effective, robust, and very localized efforts in development and governance, with the mission to connect local governments to the central government.<sup>45</sup> Like the government of South Vietnam during U.S. involvement there, the Afghanistan central government is corrupt, run by unskilled technocrats, short on credibility.<sup>46</sup> Unlike the CORDS program, the onus does exist to tie the local to the national level, with one problem: tribal, local governance in Afghanistan is the norm and the strategy to strengthen the ties between the two may be untenable.<sup>47</sup>

However, on December 2, 2009, Secretary Gates announced a shift from earlier strategic goals of democracy to more attainable goals that emphasized effective governance.<sup>48</sup> This shift suggests that governance, not necessarily tied to democracy or western-style government, is a new focus of the Obama administration. This shift has merit, but the development of the exact form of tribal leadership operating inside of a confederate style, weaker centralized government creates a new obstacle to stability and COIN efforts. Regardless, without some form of unifying

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<sup>45</sup> McLay, 8.

<sup>46</sup> NATO Afghanistan Report, *Second Annual Report on Afghanistan*, produced by NATO's Public Diplomacy Division (2009), [http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2009\\_03/20090331\\_090331\\_afghanistan\\_report\\_2009.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2009_03/20090331_090331_afghanistan_report_2009.pdf), 19 (accessed March 12, 2010); Scoville, 6.

<sup>47</sup> Defense Link: United States Department of Defense News, "Press resources" under "Senate Foreign Relations Committee/Download Testimony/The Honorable Robert Gates," 3, <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/> (accessed December 3, 2009).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 3.



government, confederation or otherwise, with requisite staying power and credibility, the emergence of a rival system to fill the void of *effective* governance left by the departure of the multinational coalition would rival the fall of South Vietnam in 1975. Notwithstanding the shift in USG support of differing types of government for Afghanistan, U.S. efforts to build any governance rests on interagency policy and real, tangible actions of both U.S. and Afghan officials.

Early in the War on Terror, in 2004, Secretary of State Colin Powell attempted to address this potential vacuum from a policy level by creating the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS).<sup>49</sup> In striking contrast to the relationship between the DEPCORDS and the president in the 1960s, this coordinator answers only to the Secretary of State and not the commander on the ground.<sup>50</sup> This new office for USG interagency coordination resides in the State Department, ostensibly as the lead agent for interagency activity; however, it is only in a ‘partnered’ relationship with other agencies, and not in command.<sup>51</sup> This ‘leading’

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<sup>49</sup> Dennis C. Jett, “The Interagency And Counterinsurgency Warfare: Stability, Security, Transition, And Reconstruction Roles” (Symposium Volume, U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 12; US Department of State website, “Offices Reporting Directly to the Secretary,” <http://www.state.gov/s/crs/index.htm> (accessed November 12, 2009).

<sup>50</sup> The Core Mission of S/CRS is to lead, coordinate and institutionalize US Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations, and to help stabilize and reconstruct societies in transition from conflict or civil strife, so they can reach a sustainable path toward peace, democracy and a market economy. US Department of State website, “Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization,” <http://www.state.gov/s/crs/> (accessed November 12, 2009).

<sup>51</sup> Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, July 14, 2008 : S/CRS’ Planning Office is responsible for building an interagency capacity within the US Government to plan for conflict transformation. The office works with US Government, non-governmental, and multilateral partners to develop, implement, and refine a set of planning and metrics tools to foster whole-of-government approaches to conflict response.

In addition, the planning team develops and provides training in civil-military and multilateral planning for conflict transformation, to promote global civilian planning capacity. The Planning office engages in outreach to our partners within and outside the US Government to introduce and solicit feedback on our planning tools. Through US Joint Forces Command’s Multi-National Experiment series, Planning also facilitates a civil-military dialogue that allows for constructive discussions among key on-the-ground actors, including NGO and international organization colleagues, about the value added of civilians in military planning processes and a framework for civil-military planning. US Department of State website, “Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization,” <http://www.state.gov/s/crs/66423.htm> (accessed November 12, 2009).

function for the State Department can be juxtaposed with the November 2005 DOD Directive 3000.05 which states: “Stability operations are a core military mission. . .” and that the DOD, “. . . shall be prepared to work closely with relevant US Departments and Agencies. . .”. The newest, post-SOFA/SFA DOD 3000.05 instruction dated September 2009 modifies the term ‘working closely’ with others to ‘supporting planning, collaborating, and assisting other agencies for stability operations.’<sup>52</sup> Although the DOD has recently refined and strengthened the language for support of stability operations, collaboration and support performance by both DOD and DOS actors remain independently reviewed agents of their parent organizations, without true oversight of a single or unifying leader. The 2007-2012 DOS/USAID strategy contains weak language for interagency cooperation, offering only to *support* all parties and containing the non-sequitur that they will “continue to work with the Iraqi Army and police,” which is, in reality, clearly the de facto and de jure role of the military.<sup>53</sup> A newly created position of potential merit for interagency cooperation, found in the latest DODI 30005.05, is the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities (ASD(SO/LIC&IC)). The ASD(SO/LIC&IC) is responsible for the integration of stabilization and reconstruction operations and to coordinate interagency synchronization mechanisms and policy.<sup>54</sup> Although both the S/CRS and (the new) ASD (SO/LIC&IC) are charged with interagency leadership, cooperation

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<sup>52</sup> US Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 3000.05, Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations* (November 28, 2005) (Washington, D.C., 2005); DTIC Online, “Information for the Defense Community” under “DOD Issuances/Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 30005.05, Stability Operations (September 16, 2009),” <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/300005p.pdf> (accessed November 12, 2009).

<sup>53</sup> Iraq: Our foremost policy priority is to help the Iraqi people build a democratic, stable, and prosperous Iraq. To that end, we will continue to support all parties in their attempt to work towards a resolution of the outstanding issues, and to provide a secure environment for our overall objectives. The United States will continue to play a prominent role in helping the Iraqi people in economic and political reconstruction. We also will continue to work with the Iraqi military and police to ensure that a capable security force is prepared to assume control over all of Iraq. (*Strategic Goal Linkages*: 1, 2, 3, and others), US Department of State, “DOS/USAID Strategic Plan 2007, Fiscal Years 2007-2012,” 50, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/82819.pdf> (accessed November 10, 2009).

<sup>54</sup> US Department of Defense. *Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 3000.05. Stability Operations* (16 September 2009) (Washington, D.C., 2009), 6,7.

and policy advisement, they still function under two separate organizations. As the focus of this analysis is USG actions and subsequent documentation between 2001 and 2009, emerging efficacy from new policies or positions such as the announced troop expansion for Afghanistan or ASD (SO/LIC&IC) remain topics for further study.<sup>55</sup>

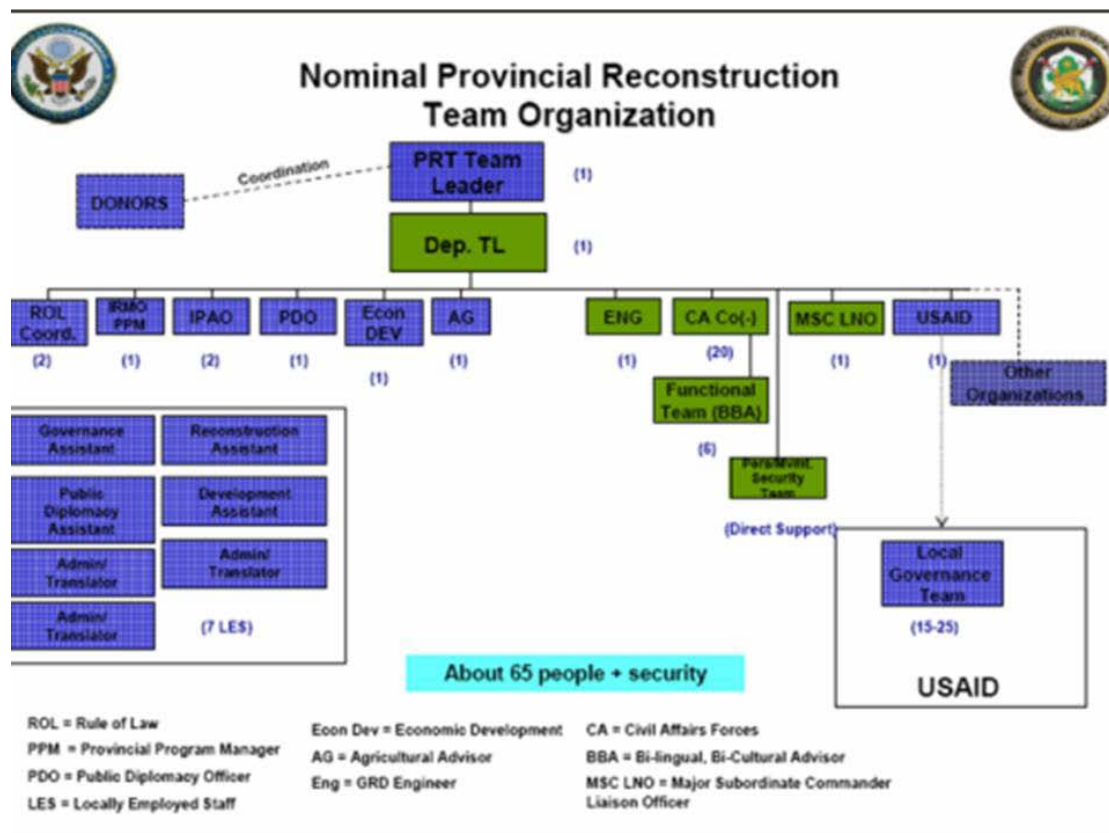
## **Entrance of the Iraq PRT and embedded PRT concept**

As the Afghanistan PRTs continued their work at the provincial level, composed predominately with military personnel, the human terrain in Iraq required a similar effort. The Afghanistan PRTs, like their CORDS predecessors, achieved some measure of tactical success, and these institutionalizing effects reached into Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2005. MNF-I and the US embassy in Iraq issued Cable 4045 in October 2005, establishing Iraq based PRTs.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> The White House website, “Speeches and Remarks” under “Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan: Eisenhower Hall Theatre, United States Military Academy at West Point, West Point, New York,” <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan> (accessed December 3, 2009).

<sup>56</sup> Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGR), *Status of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Iraq Report, SIGIR 06-034*, i., (Arlington, October 2006) <http://www.sigr.mil/reports/pdf/audits/06-034.pdf> (accessed November 12, 2009).



**Figure 4. US PRT Organizational structure at the provincial level in Iraq.<sup>57</sup>**

Recognizing the importance of stability operations, one month later Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld issued DOD Directive 3000.05, which states: “. . . stability operations are a core US military mission . . . comparable to combat operations and to be explicitly addressed and integrated across all DOD activities...”<sup>58</sup> These two documents laid the groundwork for a slightly modified PRT construct, notably in the leadership of the teams. US State department civilian designees led the PRTs in Iraq, comprised of federal civilian and military team members.<sup>59</sup>

Two months after the establishment of Iraq-based PRTs, President Bush issued National Security Defense Directive 44, directing the State Department to coordinate nation-building

<sup>57</sup> McLay, 11.

<sup>58</sup> US Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 3000.05, Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations* (November 28, 2005), 2.

<sup>59</sup> McLay, 11.

efforts; however, it stopped short of the requirement specified in President Johnson's NSAM 362 that demanded (and achieved) inter-agency melding at the operational level.<sup>60</sup> PRTs began to spread across the primary regions of Iraq, generally following the Afghan PRT model, but with a notable exception: leadership by State department personnel with military deputies.<sup>61</sup> This practice hearkened back to the spirit of the CORDS interagency leadership framework. This leadership, however, due to the limited nature of NSDD 44, did not extend to interagency rating requirements, so the co-equal status without official review remained intact from the Afghanistan model.<sup>62</sup> In 2006, the violence across Iraq expanded significantly, with the Bush administration directing the "New Way Forward" or so-called surge of 2007.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Federation of American Scientists, "National Security Presidential Directive 44: Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization: December 7, 2005," <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-44.html> (accessed November 12, 2009); National Security Action Memorandum 362.

<sup>61</sup> Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGR), *Quarterly Report to the US Congress, October 30, 2007*, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1st sess., (Washington, DC, October 2007), [http://www.sigr.mil/reports/QuarterlyReports/Oct07/pdf/Report\\_-\\_October\\_2007.pdf](http://www.sigr.mil/reports/QuarterlyReports/Oct07/pdf/Report_-_October_2007.pdf) (accessed November 18, 2009): 5-6.

<sup>62</sup> United States Institute of Peace, "Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Iraq PRT Experience Project, Interview #11: deputy director, National Coordination Team, March 11, 2008," [http://www.usip.org/files/file/resources/collections/histories/iraq\\_prt/11.pdf](http://www.usip.org/files/file/resources/collections/histories/iraq_prt/11.pdf) (accessed November 30, 2009).

<sup>63</sup> Whitehouse Archives, "Highlights of the Iraq Strategy: National Security Council Summary Briefing Slides, January 2007," under "The New Way Forward in Iraq," <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/iraq/2007/iraq-strategy011007.pdf>, 5-7, (accessed December 2, 2009).

## ePRT 5 Organization Chart



Aligned with  
2<sup>nd</sup> Stryker Brigade  
Combat Team,  
25<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
Division,  
MND-B  
2007-2009

AS OF: FEB 2009

BBA's are DOD Contractors from  
Operational Services & Support (OSS)  
Fayetteville, NC

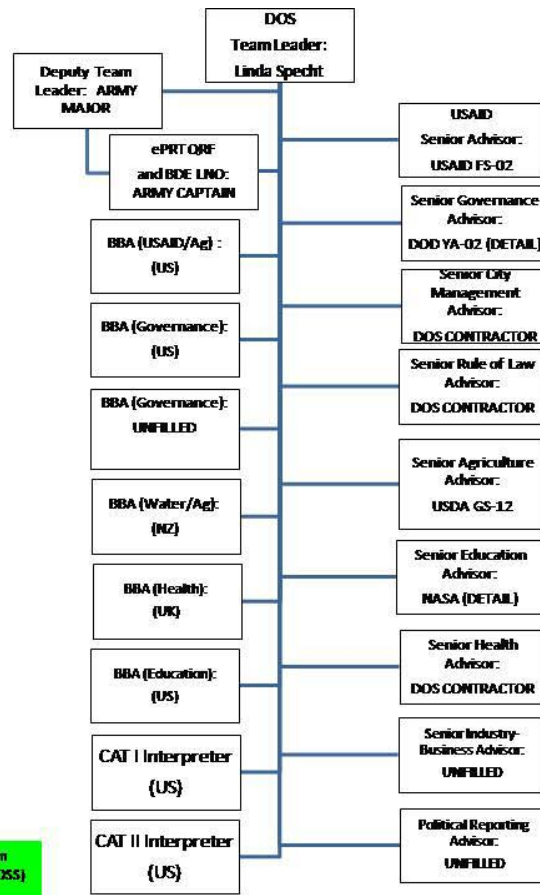


Figure 5. Organizational structure for ePRT #5 in the Baghdad Province.<sup>64</sup>

To complement this surge of military forces, the strategy included a doubling of civilian forces for reconstruction operations, along with the emergent organization of the “embedded” Provincial Reconstruction Team or EPRT. The National Security Guidance dictated partnering these civilian teams with brigade size units, again recalling the original 4-man team Vietnam-era district level elements, usually composed of two senior military officers, one USAID foreign service officer, and the department of state team leader.<sup>65</sup> Both the PRT and EPRTs had the

<sup>64</sup> Highfill, John D., “EPRT 5 Organizational Chart, 2007-2009” (Created by author, March 12, 2010).

<sup>65</sup> Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGR), *Status of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program Expansion in Iraq*, SIGIR-07-014: 25 July 2007, 110<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., (Washington, DC, July 2007), <http://www.sigir.mil/reports/pdf/audits/07-014.pdf> (accessed November 12, 2009): 1-4; Highlights of the Iraq Strategy, National Security Council Summary Briefing Slides, January 2007, 11.

latitude to grow as the local situation required and as military support in theater and U.S. agency support in the United States could afford.<sup>66</sup> The advent of the Iraq based PRT/EPRTs was the culmination of several strategic documents, emergent techniques, tactics, and procedures (TTPs), and the coalescence of certain opinions within the USG (particularly DOS and DOD) on how best to manage stabilization and nation building in these conflicts. These PRTs and EPRTs performed reasonably well, and USG assessments determined they contributed to the overall stability at the provincial/sub-provincial levels.<sup>67</sup> For the remainder of this paper, analysis of U.S. and Iraqi strategic to tactical policy implementation reveals additional options for operational approaches in future contingencies, to include ongoing operations in Afghanistan.

## **National Strategic Guidance and Policy in Iraq**

“Being incomplete and self-contradictory, [war] cannot follow its own laws, but has to be treated as a part of some other whole; the name of which is policy.”<sup>68</sup>

A review of some of the documents that lead to the creation of the PRTs/EPRTs from the historical sense (CORDS), or the contemporary overseas contingency environment(s), frames the following review of strategic guidance, revealing that implementation at the operational and tactical level is vital for overall, long lasting success. Multiple documents, strategies, plans, reports and guidance created over the last eight years direct military and USG interagency efforts, but few contained binding policy guidance on the requisite, truly bonding whole of government

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<sup>66</sup> Sergeant First Class Jesse P. Pruett, US Army Reserve, “The Interagency Future: Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Task Force Marne,” *Military Review* 89, no. 5 (September-October 2009): 55-58.

<sup>67</sup> Long, 59,60; Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGR), *Quarterly Report to the US Congress, April 30, 2008*, 110<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>d</sup> sess., (Washington, DC, April 2008), [http://www.sigir.mil/reports/QuarterlyReports/Apr08/pdf/Report\\_-\\_April\\_2008.pdf](http://www.sigir.mil/reports/QuarterlyReports/Apr08/pdf/Report_-_April_2008.pdf) (accessed November 18, 2009): 23.

<sup>68</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: University Press, 1976), 606.

approach and complementary strategic vision that allows full operational implementation.<sup>69</sup> The next section provides a review of this guidance and analyses implementation at the operational level to determine its relevance to existing strategic guidance.

## **National Strategies: Executive Guidance**

The July 2008 Government Accounting Office (GAO) report on Iraq listed only eight strategic-related documents that explained the executive strategy in Iraq from January 2007 to April 2008; the GAO found them generally wanting.<sup>70</sup> Initial direction for the agencies and departments required to implement strategy at the operational and tactical level came from NSPD 44 to integrate and perform a whole of government approach for Iraq. NSPD 44 directed interagency cooperation under the auspices of the Secretary of State through the S/CRS, but did not specifically streamline the unity of command, as did NSAM 362. The de jure relationship of a DEPCORDS to the COMUSMACV was not replicated by the S/CRS to the MNF-I commander or even the US Ambassador's director of Office of Provincial Affairs which is located in the embassy and not at MNF-I HQ.<sup>71</sup>

The National Security Strategy (NSS) is silent on a key issue: interagency funding that drives actual cooperation through unity of effort (or command).<sup>72</sup> Additionally, the NSS provides no recommendation or guiding policy concerning the relationship of the S/CRS role of nation

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<sup>69</sup> Government Accounting Office Report, "Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq: Some Gains made, Updated Strategy Needed," (July 2008). <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d081021t.pdf> (accessed November 30, 2009): 14.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>71</sup> Jett, 12-15.

<sup>72</sup> Scott R. Feil, "The Failure of Incrementalism: Interagency Coordination Challenges and Responses" (Symposium Volume, U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 310.



building to national interests. NSAM 362-type language does not appear even in general usage for current or future complex contingency operations.<sup>73</sup>

Although strategic guidance for Iraq gave the appearance of interagency unity of effort, it existed in reality only at the level of the U.S. Mission to MNF-I. Several administrative releases and actions reflect this fact, most notably the main strategy proffered for Iraq, a classified (secret) document called the Joint Common Plan (JCP). This plan, as stated by the unclassified 2008 Government Accounting Office report, “. . . is not a strategic plan; it is an operational plan with limitations that GAO will discuss during the closed portion of the hearing.”<sup>74</sup> The de facto executive level, national strategy essentially relegated vision and policy directly to the JCP through the actions of NSPD 44; this limited operational plan became the U.S. strategy in Iraq.

## **National Strategies: Departmental Guidance**

Nesting guidance and plans is common in the military; similarly, the DOS/USAID published a standing strategy for fiscal years 2007-2012 that nested with the National Security Strategy of 2006.<sup>75</sup> The DOS/USAID updated this strategy, which specified regional priorities (for Iraq), prior to publication of the executive strategic guidance (as noted in the GAO report in July, 2008), preventing the nesting effect that the DOS-side of the JCP could encompass, due to its publication date. Therefore, although interagency cooperation appeared to exist in the form of joint signatures of the DOD and DOS representatives on the JCP (2006-2008), the overriding tone of the document is operational at best. Additionally, as seen in the unclassified nested UCP

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<sup>73</sup> Strategic Studies Institute, “The National Security Strategy: 2006,” <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/nss.pdf> (accessed on February 20, 2010).

<sup>74</sup> Government Accounting Office Report, “Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq: Some Gains made, Updated Strategy Needed,” (July 2008): 1, 11, 15,16.

<sup>75</sup> US Agency for International Development, “Department of State/US Agency for International Development: Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2007-2008” under “USAID Policy,” [http://www.usaid.gov/policy/coordination/stratplan\\_fy07-12.html](http://www.usaid.gov/policy/coordination/stratplan_fy07-12.html), 2 (accessed November 12, 2009).

interpretation, a checklist format appears that is tactically oriented on an operational document without clear strategic ties.

The role of the operational level UCP for strategic purposes immediately devolved to metric measuring at the tactical level, which represents the effective distillation of U.S. strategy in Iraq. Dale R. Herspring stated that, “all national security issues have both a political and military component.”<sup>76</sup> As an operational plan, the JCP is almost strictly military in nature, notwithstanding the multiple civil capacity-building tasks that emerge in the UCP. The divisional level UCP, as ostensibly derived from the Force/embassy level JCP, marginally refines the operationally minded political components into operational/tactical tasks that have objectives, Measures of Performance (MOP) and Measures of Effectiveness (MOE).<sup>77</sup> As a strategy (apart from the general SOFA/SFA), the JCP and nested UCP(s) avoid discussing strategic vision and rather focus on specifics, generally in terms of military-oriented tasks. A glaring example is the nearly all-military MNF-I Force Strategic Engagement Cell (FSEC), charged with conducting key leader engagements with Iraqi governmental leaders and influential Iraqi personnel (to include insurgent entities) targeting them to achieve goals imbedded in the JCP reconciliation line of operation.<sup>78</sup> This MNF-I thirty-person cell had only one State Department officer, representing the ambassador.<sup>79</sup> Additionally, the non-alignment of sub-provincial (Qadas) concerning civilian efforts and military forces pre-and post-SOFA/SFA presented challenges at the tactical level.

Unity of effort, if not command, is vital along these internal borders because, as Galula points out, insurgents work both sides of administrative borders to their advantage.<sup>80</sup> The genesis

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<sup>76</sup> Dale R. Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas 2005), 8.

<sup>77</sup> MND-B and PRT-B Baghdad Province Unified Common Plan. December 2008.

<sup>78</sup> Jeanne F. Hull, “Iraq: Strategic Reconciliation, Targeting, and Key Leader Engagement” (Letort Paper, Strategic Studies Institute, September 2009), 15, 20.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 17-20.

<sup>80</sup> Galula, 35, 51.

from vision, policy, and strategy into a notionally operational, but mostly tactical, format occurs in one action in the UCP/JCP documentation. This straight-to-tactical phenomenon occurred without a corresponding basis in relevant policy, resulting in a shift in emphasis from executing strategically based policy to conducting loosely integrated tactical actions. This course of events is in direct contravention to Clausewitz's cautionary guidance that "Policy is the guiding intelligence and war only the instrument, not vice versa."<sup>81</sup> If the JCP is touted as strategic guidance or policy, but in practice it operates at the tactical level of tasks and focuses on the metric measuring requirements of the (military-enacted) UCP, the strategic-operational link is broken, and the tactical aspect of war becomes the unexamined 'guiding intelligence'.

Notwithstanding iterative JCPs from the US Embassy and MNF-I, the embassy-produced SOFA/SFA, signed at the end of 2008, served as the ostensible 'finish line' for the U.S. presence in Iraq and a 'starting line' for new military and political engagements. The SOFA/SFA only constitutes a short reprieve for true operational and tactical action for U.S. military and civilian forces in Iraq, as both congressional support and an effective Iraqi military and government are required for further strategic development between the two countries. As both civilian and military forces draw down, execution of a strategy in Iraq free from a US military presence will have to rely on a purely diplomatic resource at the highest levels of government: the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq. Moreover, as Huntington remarked, "Diplomacy itself only provides a superficial covering for the existence and uses of power."<sup>82</sup>

As execution of the JCP strategy (operational plan) occurred through nested plans (Unified Common Plan) at the Division, Brigade, PRT, and EPRT levels from 2007-2009, a strategic transformation emerged; the policy implementation of tactical and operational plans

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<sup>81</sup> Clausewitz, 607.

<sup>82</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and The State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), 66.

derived from an operational standpoint and not from a truly strategic footing.<sup>83</sup> In effect, the only remaining timely, national-level security documentation to draw guidance from was the national military strategy (NMS), published in 2005 (dated 2004) and the national defense strategy (NDS) published in June 2008.<sup>84</sup> It is not surprising then, that the most recent strategic guidance originated within the DOD and an operationally and tactically focused JCP provided the overriding theme of the de facto Iraq strategy. With civil and military capacity building necessary for the future success of any security cooperation between the two nations, strategic vision and planning must precede operational and tactical implementation of the SFA.

### **National Strategies: DOS: Straw man as Primary Implementing Partner**

The basis for security cooperation is the SOFA/SFA, which, to date, has only resulted in the announced draw down of U.S. military and civilian forces and the October 2009 announcement of a diplomatic Joint Coordination Committee on UN charter chapter 7 (reparations to Kuwait from 1991).<sup>85</sup> Concerning the December 1, 2009 announcement by the POTUS on Afghanistan, there was scant mention of interagency coordination or whole of

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<sup>83</sup> MND-B and PRT-B Baghdad Province Unified Common Plan. December 2008.

<sup>84</sup> Defense Link: United States Department of Defense News, “National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2004” under “News/March 2005”, <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050318nms.pdf> (accessed November 30, 2009); Defense Link, United States Department of Defense News, “National Defense Strategy of the United States of America 2008” under “News, 2008”, <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/2008%20National%20Defense%20Strategy.pdf> (accessed November 30, 2009).

<sup>85</sup> Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGR), *Quarterly Report to the US Congress, October 30, 2009*, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1st sess., (Washington, DC, October 2009), [http://www.sigr.mil/reports/QuarterlyReports/Oct09/pdf/Report\\_-\\_October\\_2009.pdf](http://www.sigr.mil/reports/QuarterlyReports/Oct09/pdf/Report_-_October_2009.pdf) (accessed November 18, 2009): 3,5; Department of State website, “2009 Secretary Clinton’s Remarks,” under “Remarks With Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki After Their Meeting (October 19, 2009)” <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/10/130702.htm> (accessed November 30, 2009); Irish Times Limited, “UN preparing Iraq-Kuwait dispute plan, November 16, 2009” Irish Times.com, <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2009/1116/breaking88.htm> (accessed November 30, 2009).

government unity of effort.<sup>86</sup> Notably, both the SECDEF and SECSTATE mentioned interagency cooperation individually in follow on statements, but no new policy or initiatives to support the assertions, nor the obvious connection and shared focus of interagency operations and security issues in Iraq.<sup>87</sup> The survival of the immature SFA concept requires a basis in future bi-lateral engagements emerging from a strategic vision and plan, not a metric-based operational plan such as the JCP or coordination committees overseeing reparations to Kuwait. Notably, unlike the CORDS program that saw a programmed increase in support for pacification as military forces reduced, the PRT civilian workforces will draw down in a like fashion to their military counterparts, potentially jeopardizing bottom up engagements required to professionalize the Iraqi government and reduce corruption.<sup>88</sup>

The role of the Department of State S/CRS as both interagency and reconstruction coordinator is acutely shaped from DOS/USAID historical underpinnings. Accordingly, the individual and collective experiences span from real and perceived lessons of the European Recovery Plan (ERP) to the CORDS program.<sup>89</sup> Dr. Walt W. Rostow (economics PhD), represents the confluence of his direct experience implementing the ERP (forerunner to USAID under the auspices of Marshall's State department) to senior advisor on socio-economic policy in

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<sup>86</sup> The White House website, under "Speeches and Remarks", Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan: Eisenhower Hall Theatre, United States Military Academy at West Point, West Point, New York, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan> (accessed December 3, 2009).

<sup>87</sup> US Senate Foreign Relations Committee website, "Afghanistan: Assessing The Road Ahead" under "The Honorable Hillary Clinton," <http://foreign.senate.gov/hearings/hearing/20091203/> (accessed on December 3, 2009), 2, 4; Defense Link: United States Department of Defense News, "Press resources" under, "Senate Foreign Relations Committee/Download Testimony/The Honorable Robert Gates," <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/3>, (accessed December 3, 2009).

<sup>88</sup> Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGR), *Quarterly Report to the US Congress, October 30, 2009*, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1st sess., (Washington, DC, October 2009), [http://www.sigr.mil/reports/QuarterlyReports/Oct07/pdf/Report\\_-\\_October\\_2007.pdf](http://www.sigr.mil/reports/QuarterlyReports/Oct07/pdf/Report_-_October_2007.pdf) (accessed November 18, 2009): 2,3,35,38; Scoville, 83.

<sup>89</sup> US Agency for International Development, "USAID History: The 1961 Foreign Assistance Act, [http://www.usaid.gov/about\\_usaid/usaidhist.html](http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/usaidhist.html) (accessed February 18, 2010).

Vietnam to both President Kennedy and Johnson.<sup>90</sup> Dr. Rostow's reputation as a champion of intervention in Vietnam unsettled some, and ranged from bombing raid target selection of key economic- industrial infrastructure to economic/political theory, producing declarative statements such as, "... communist-inspired revolution 'a disease of the transition to modernization.'"<sup>91</sup> Shadows of the prestigious Marshall Plan and today's PRT socio-economic based framework are attributable not only to Ambassador Komer, but to Dr. Walt Rostow, who formed part of the "Rostow Group".<sup>92</sup>

Dr. Rostow, as a former bombing-target planner of the WWII Office of Strategic Services, adhered to his earlier experiences by urging similar targeting in Vietnam.<sup>93</sup> Notably, Rostow's authorship of 'stages of economic development' provided affirmation for his economic based pacification theories while simultaneously insisting on infrastructure targeting.<sup>94</sup> This 'Rostow group' postulated a post-modern linkage between country-level political change and economic conditions late in the war, by the firmly embedded W.W. Rostow as Johnson's Special Advisor on National Security.<sup>95</sup> The USAID *Our History* web link continues to justify current development policy from President Kennedy quotes and Dr. Rostow's economic theory, reflecting western modernity precepts overcoming traditional eastern culture.<sup>96</sup> Although the

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<sup>90</sup> David Halberstam, *The Best And The Brightest* (New York: Random House, 1969, 1971, 1972), 156-165.

<sup>91</sup> Beckett, 186; Halberstam, 159-161.

<sup>92</sup> USAID History, *The 1961 Foreign Assistance Act*, [http://www.usaid.gov/about\\_usaid/usaidhist.html](http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/usaidhist.html) (accessed February 18, 2010).

<sup>93</sup> Halberstam, 631.

<sup>94</sup> USAID History; Halberstam, 631.

<sup>95</sup> Beckett, 200; Halberstam, 627; Guardian Newspaper website, *Walt Rostow Obituary*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/2003/feb/17/guardianobituaries.usa> (accessed February 17, 2010).

<sup>96</sup> "Today, when foreign economic assistance programs are under scrutiny, it is worth quoting President Kennedy's remarks at length:

"For no objective supporter of foreign aid can be satisfied with the existing program--actually a multiplicity of programs. Bureaucratically fragmented, awkward and slow, its administration is diffused over a haphazard and irrational structure covering at least four departments and several other agencies. The

Rostow/Komer actions produced some limited positive effects on the ground in Vietnam, the lasting legacy in the PRT program is this: promotion of modernization through American intervention is a staple of DOS and USAID activities.<sup>97</sup>

Two administrative lessons from CORDS did not translate to PRTs: USAID retained the autonomy it possessed in development efforts in Vietnam during OIF/OEF, and CORDS interagency unity of command remained absent in favor of ‘collaborative partnerships’.<sup>98</sup> James Wirtz connects the failure to assess accurately ongoing stability operations to his observation that “. . . scholars, soldiers, and policymakers alike lack a clear and shared understanding of how stability operations actually produce stability.”<sup>99</sup> The ability to understand what produces stability

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program is based on a series of legislative measures and administrative procedures conceived at different times and for different purposes, many of them now obsolete, inconsistent, and unduly rigid and thus unsuited for our present needs and purposes. Its weaknesses have begun to undermine confidence in our effort both here and abroad.

"Although our aid programs have helped to avoid economic chaos and collapse, and assisted many nations to maintain their independence and freedom--nevertheless, it is a fact that many of the nations we are helping are not much nearer sustained economic growth than they were when our aid operation began. Money spent to meet crisis situations or short-term political objectives while helping to maintain national integrity and independence has rarely moved the recipient nation toward greater economic stability."

(USAID preemptively answers the obvious question in the next paragraph, author's note) Why, then, should the United States continue a foreign economic assistance program?

"The answer is that there is no escaping our obligations: our moral obligations as a wise leader and good neighbor in the interdependent community of free nations--our economic obligations as the wealthiest people in a world of largely poor people, as a nation no longer dependent upon the loans from abroad that once helped us develop our own economy--and our political obligations as the single largest counter to the adversaries of freedom.

"To fail to meet those obligations now would be disastrous; and, in the long run, more expensive. For widespread poverty and chaos lead to a collapse of existing political and social structures which would inevitably invite the advance of totalitarianism into every weak and unstable area. Thus our own security would be endangered and our prosperity imperiled. A program of assistance to the underdeveloped nations must continue because the Nation's interest and the cause of political freedom require it." USAID website, *USAID History*, (accessed February 17, 2010); François Jullien, *A Treatise on Efficacy: Between Western and Chinese Thinking*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 55-61, 151.

<sup>97</sup> Lant Pritchett, "Is USAID about Aid or Development?" <http://aidwatchers.com/2009/06/is-usaid-about-aid-or-development/> (accessed February 18, 2010).

<sup>98</sup> Beckett, 200; Timothy Vouno, "Challenges for Civil-Military Integration During Stability Operations" (Center for Strategic and International Studies Washington, DC, 2008): 20.

<sup>99</sup> James J. Wirtz, "The Exquisite Problem of Victory: Measuring Success in Unconventional Operations" (Symposium Volume, U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 274.

in an ideal institution would be difficult; the reality of dissimilar organizations or non-unified reporting changes increases this difficulty. For example, the cumulative USAID expenditures in Iraq exceed \$3.7 billion, but the lead USAID PRT coordinator still reports to the USAID director, not the State Department or DOD.<sup>100</sup> Simple coordination and collaboration with the military and DOS, as required in the duty description of the lead USAID PRT Coordinator in Iraq, is subject to interpretation by USAID as an autonomous entity of the State Department.

Interagency cooperation and collaboration, as a watchword between the DOD, DOS, and USAID, is often just that, a watchword. The 2008 USAID “Civil Military Cooperation Policy” provides guiding principles on interagency cooperation, but still reserves the right *not* to cooperate: “4(1) a. Cooperation with the DOD will not divert USAID resources away from its development mission or the principles of effective development assistance.”<sup>101</sup> In short, if the implementing agent from USAID or the sub-contractor to USAID defines a program or project as a developmental mission, both internal policy and USAID rating scheme primacy trump compliance with DOD or DOS SSTR strategy. The DOS ostensibly has administrative control of USAID actions, but in practice at the tactical or strategic level, is still subject to the USAID program manager or lead administrator’s predilections by presidential direction.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Relief Website, “USAID PRT Field Support Coordinator duties and description,” <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/res.nsf/db900sid/OCHA-7Z3HZJ?OpenDocument> (accessed February 17, 2010).

<sup>101</sup> Small Wars Journal, “USAID Civil-Military Cooperation Policy: July 2008,” 3, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/civilianmilitarycooperation.pdf> (accessed February 18, 2010).

<sup>102</sup> (Dual hatting the USAID administrator, author’s note): “The DFA will serve concurrently as Administrator of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), a position that will continue to be at the level of Deputy Secretary, and will have, consistent with existing legal requirements, authority over all State Department and USAID foreign assistance.” National Security Strategy 2006, 33; “In 1953, the Foreign Operations Administration was established as an independent government agency outside the Department of State, to consolidate economic and technical assistance on a world-wide basis. Its responsibilities were merged into the International Cooperation Administration (ICA) one year later.

The ICA administered aid for economic, political and social development purposes. Although the ICA’s functions were vast and far reaching, unlike USAID, ICA had many limitations placed upon it. As a part of the Department of State, ICA did not have the level of autonomy the USAID currently maintains,”



## Operations in Iraq: PRT/ePRT 2005-2009

### Operational Art: OPA and PRT-Baghdad

Using the term “operational art” as the vehicle for coordination of tactical actions nested in a higher strategic purpose is relevant in the interagency realm for reconstruction and stability efforts. Operational art, as defined by FM 3-0, “is the application of creative imagination by commanders and staffs-supported by their skill, knowledge, and experience-to design strategies, campaigns, and major operations and organize and employ military forces.”<sup>103</sup> This definition is commonly associated with military tasks, but in post-conflict or ongoing stability operations during limited conflict, the introduction of civilian expertise for civil capacity building requires the inclusion and expanded definition of the term “interagency” in the applied actions of operational art.

The DOS Office for Provincial Affairs (OPA) is “. . . tasked with synchronizing governance, reconstruction, security and economic development assistance to the PRTs . . .”, but, at best, was a monitoring agency for the autonomous activities of the PRTs/EPRTs.<sup>104</sup> Likewise, PRT-Baghdad did not act as a rigid, controlling headquarters or operational command structure for sub-provincial EPRTs in the Baghdad province.<sup>105</sup> PRT-Baghdad (PRT-B) initially operated as a small staff section with an uneven mix of military and civilian expertise operating in the municipal area of the city of Baghdad, with limited control or contact with embedded PRTs operating in the same province.

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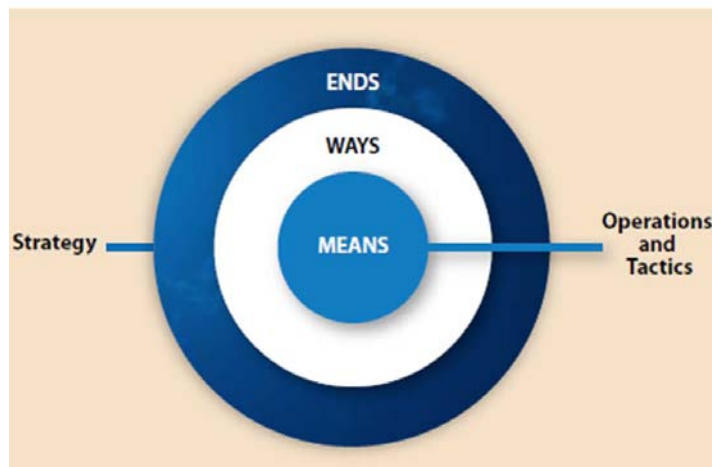
USAID History, *Historical Perspective*, [http://www.usaid.gov/about\\_usaid/usaidhist.html](http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/usaidhist.html) (accessed February 18, 2010). This autonomy, even from the Department of State, is accentuated on the DOS organizational chart by a dotted-line box for the USAID administrator from the Secretary of State, whereas others have the solid line. US Department of State, “Department of State Organizational Chart, 2010,” <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/99588.pdf> (accessed February 18, 2010).

<sup>103</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations*, (Washington, D.C., 2008), 6-1.

<sup>104</sup> Vouno, 20.

<sup>105</sup> Operational Leadership Experiences Project: Interview with Major John Dale Highfill, January 27, 2010, 10.

Using the definition of operational art as “the thoughtful sequencing of tactical action to achieve a subordinate objective within a campaign,” and extending it to the tactical actions of civil-military activity, OPA did not function as the lead sequencer for subordinate organizations.<sup>106</sup> Although Justin Kelly and Michael Brennan recently argued against including interagency problems in operational art, their position is in direct contravention to the premise of whole-of-government efficacy concerning ends-ways-means.<sup>107</sup> Operational art must account for the means, specifically in post-conflict or stability operations. Kelly and Brennan’s diagram (Figure 6) provides a visual depiction for the application of ends, ways, and means at all levels of war, which also supports the inclusion of interagency considerations during stability operations, since these are an essential part of the ‘whole of war’ construct in the continuum of US operations.<sup>108</sup>



**Figure 6. Ends, Ways, and Means in War as a whole.<sup>109</sup>**

The relationship between the PRT/EPRTs and OPA focused primarily on uniform reporting formats with subjective assessments (Maturity Model) rather than nested, mutually

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<sup>106</sup> Justin Kelly and Michael J. Brennan, “The Leavenworth Heresy and the Perversion of Operational Art,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 56, (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2010): 116.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, 2-1-2-3.

<sup>109</sup> Kelly and Brennan, 113.

supporting mission sets as derived from strategic policy. OPA remained independent from any military command (MND-B/ MNC-I or MNF-I) with only ill-defined ‘partnership’ status to enable their orchestration of PRT/EPRT activities inside their respective operational areas. In 2009, an attempt to fill this distinct interagency operational vacuum between OPA and the DOD emerged four months after publication of the SOFA/SFA (and between one to two years after subordinate PRT-B UCP and the superior USEMB-I/MNF-I JCP).<sup>110</sup> The OPA-DOD publication of a Unified Common Plan (UCP) occurred barely two months before U.S. forces departed the urban areas of Iraq per the SOFA, resulting in it lagging behind the tactical and national-strategic level planning and assessment efforts.<sup>111</sup> Combined with strictly hierarchal or parallel chain of command/levels of command constructs, operational art suffered (and suffers) from lack of timely strategic-to tactical discourse (see Figure 6). However, the opportunity exists for the OPA to serve as the DOS contribution to a national level Reconstruction Team (RT) that provides operational orchestration and sequencing guidance to PRTs and EPRTs as suggested by NSPD 44.<sup>112</sup> Late partnering as demonstrated by the April 2009 release of the OPA and MNC-I UCP proved ineffective during OIF to include the ‘surge’ period; a relationship closer to that between the DEPCORDS and COMUSMACV should be the goal.

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<sup>110</sup> OPA and MNC-I Unified Common Plan: April 16, 2009.

<sup>111</sup> Status of Forces Agreement, 20.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 26; Long, 60,61.

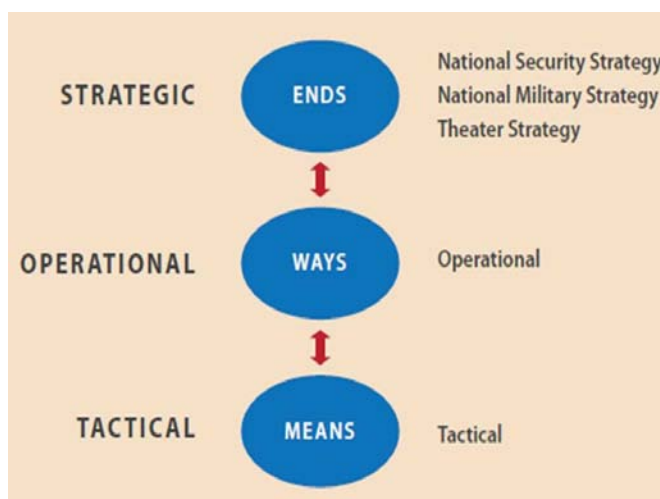


Figure 7. “Normal Theory” of The Continuum of War (Not Reflected In Practice).<sup>113</sup>

## Case Study: EPRT 5 Implementing Strategic Policy

EPRT 5, commonly known as ePRT 5, conducted embedded and unilateral missions in the suburban and rural areas to the north and west of the city of Baghdad. One mission, in development for several months by USAID and its subcontractor Inma,<sup>114</sup> centered on seed wheat yield improvements for the local area. Seed wheat or the specific type of wheat planted to yield wheat for consumer use is a staple of farmers worldwide concerned with wheat production. ePRT 5, with transportation and security assets provided by the host U.S. Army brigade (2/25 Stryker Brigade Combat Team from Schofield Barracks, HI) benefited from a unique opportunity to monitor this developmental pilot program for USAID.<sup>115</sup>

The initial foundation for the monitoring (and eventual delivery coordination) of the seed wheat program began prior to the establishment of ePRT5 in the area. The USAID advisor to the ePRT described the framework for the seed delivery by a sub-contractor called Inma to the

<sup>113</sup> Kelly and Brennan, 114.

<sup>114</sup> Inma Agri-business Program website, <http://www.inma-iraq.com/> (accessed February 22, 2010).

<sup>115</sup> Operational Leadership Experiences Project: Interview with Major John Dale Highfill, January 27, 2010; Christian Barratt (USAID representative to EPRT5) email to author, February 21, 2010.

incoming unit, 2/25 SBCT and the other members of the ePRT. The sub-contractor role encompassed securing the seed wheat from distributors in the region to include delivery to locale farmers for validating a demonstration of the high yield seed wheat. The theory of the limited distribution of seed wheat and its subsequent high yields would encourage other farmers to purchase the seed wheat. Intended goals included the development of local agriculture through higher yields, economic boost to seed distributors, and positive relationships between local farmers and USAID/US forces.<sup>116</sup>

The brigade commander of 2/25 SBCT committed fully to the civil stability and reconstruction activities of the embedded PRT; this included the seed wheat program, as initially briefed by the USAID representative. After the departure of the brigade USAID representative, follow-up oversight of the project fell to the new USAID representative and military deputy of the EPRT. Extensive research, email traffic, and phone calls to the USAID –Baghdad offices, Inma offices, and PRT-Baghdad advisors revealed that the seed wheat program faltered at the Ministry of Agriculture. The ePRT 5 USAID advisor confirmed that the Ministry of Agriculture did not approve of the high-yield seed wheat into the country, nor was he approached about the program.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Operational Leadership Experiences Project: Interview with Major John Dale Highfill, January 27, 2010; Christian Barratt (USAID representative to EPRT5) email to author, February 21, 2010.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.



**Figure 8. Seed wheat trans-load operation preparation.<sup>118</sup>**

The Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture, similar to the USDA, plays a significant role on agriculture-related trade into the nation, to include the introduction of any plants, especially this variety of seed wheat. At this point, the lack of strategic policy on nation-to-nation levels put this seed wheat program at risk. USAID development protocols did not address this eventuality, and as such, a new mission at the tactical level emerged. USAID contractual obligations to the sub-contractor forced the purchase of a second-best seed (and one already available in Iraq). A request from the Baghdad based Inma administrator to assist with the distribution of seed soon followed. The military (2/25SBCT) and ePRT5, charged with distribution of the second-best seed, provided the planning and resourcing of the program.

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<sup>118</sup> Photo from author's collection, Camp Taji 'Ground Zero' sterile unloading yard, Baghdad Province (2009).



**Figure 9. Inma seed delivery to Camp Taji.<sup>119</sup>**

In an effort to maintain relations with the local farmers and farmer associations (that were promised the seed), the ePRT USAID and USDA representatives determined the distribution plan across the western and northern Baghdad province for over 200 metric tons of seed wheat. After contacting the local Inma sub-contractor, disturbing facts surfaced concerning the distribution of seed wheat. The USAID and Inma offices were unable to determine a suitable distribution plan across the area, due to lack of information on the names or locations of the farmers or associations. The sub-contracted Inma distributor would only be able to make one drop of the 200 metric tons of seed wheat, far less than the distribution initially planned across the province .

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<sup>119</sup> Photo from author's collection, Camp Taji 'Ground Zero' sterile unloading yard, Baghdad Province (2009).



**Figure 10. Seed wheat trans-load to military control.** <sup>120</sup>

Coordination with the sub-contractor over a period of five weeks developed into a multi-stage plan for delivery to the local farmers. Two convoys of 100 metric tons each from Mosul and Irbil were escorted from north of Camp Taji (Northern Baghdad) into the camp. The ePRT Quick Reaction Fund financed local labor contracts for off-loading and palletizing the seed bags. Military personnel and equipment further trans-loaded seed wheat (now on pallets) to storage facilities on the camp. Eventually, multiple brigade platoons providing security, local labor, and transportation, along with oversight provided by the ePRT USAID and USDA representatives for distribution delivered the seed.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Photo from author's collection, Camp Taji 'Ground Zero' sterile unloading yard, Baghdad Province (2009).

<sup>121</sup> Operational Leadership Experiences Project: Interview with Major John Dale Highfill, January 27, 2010.





**Figure 11. Seed wheat transfer to storage warehouse.<sup>122</sup>**

The strategic policy questions on development and the eventual tactical implementation of this program raised serious questions. Why did the original USAID development plan not include Ministry of Agriculture approval? Why did the sub-contractor Inma or distribution contractor for the seed wheat lack visibility on the customer locations or need for wheat? Why did the contract process require purchasing of second-best seed, effectively defeating the purpose of the original program (to show the positive effects of a specific variety of wheat)? Did the multiple military and contracted activities to distribute the widely available seed wheat justify the expense and security issues? What would have happened to the 200 metric tons of wheat if the military and ePRT5 did not coordinate the actions for the USAID/Inma program? Although many of these questions emerged in the lead up to the eventual distribution operation, operational level answers related to strategic developmental goals did not surface. In this case, tactical level implementation

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<sup>122</sup> Photo from author's collection, Camp Taji 'Ground Zero' sterile unloading yard, Baghdad Province (2009).

of dubious strategic or operational developmental importance risked lives and expended significant funding.<sup>123</sup>

## **RAND Study: Interagency Operational Efficacy Reviewed**

A 2008 RAND Study undertaken over a period of two years developed several major recommendations concerning operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>124</sup> The document maintains that no major organizational shift in the U.S. government, departmental or agency line and block charts are required; however, it does put the onus on the National Security Council to act in a capacity greater than simple fire and forget policy arbiters. Further, there is slight contradiction in the initial statement that no major change in the U.S. government is required by encouraging sweeping executive orders and congressional action, to include a potential ‘interagency Goldwater-Nichols Act’ if action by the departments or president does not materialize.<sup>125</sup> Multiple references throughout the document concerning the interaction between the DOD, DOS, and USAID encourage cooperation, policy guidance, and unity of effort that reflected earlier Vietnam-era activities by the same entities.

Common themes of unity of effort through command relationships, feedback loops between strategic stakeholders and tactical implementers of stability operations in pre-or post-conflict contingencies repeated throughout the document. Reference to the CORDS program as a preferred model occurred, even over the existing Iraqi or Afghanistan programs, but not in total infrastructure or strategic purpose. The RAND precepts for the integration of the instruments of power and influence relied heavily on the disparate goals of the DOD/DOS/USAID actors and congressional budgeting acumen to promote stability. The theme of the document pointed to the

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<sup>123</sup> Operational Leadership Experiences Project: Interview with Major John Dale Highfill, January 27, 2010; Christian Barratt (USAID representative to EPRT5) email to author, February 21, 2010.

<sup>124</sup> Hunter, vii-xi.

<sup>125</sup> Hunter, x-xi.

promising CORDS program's ability to integrate instruments of power (although too late) with a keener eye towards strategic policy from the NSC and the accompanying budgeting/policy oversight of Congress.

The RAND study, similar to the Forging a New Shield Study, reflects national strategic or 'grand strategy' principles that directly affect interagency activity and tactical operations, whether conducted by the U.S. military or civilian Foreign Services Officers. Although arguable, tactical level implementation of strategic policy goals without the requisite feedback mechanism found in operational art, whether located in a specific level of command, or other venue, results in less than optimal efficacy and long term effectiveness.<sup>126</sup> Additionally, 'muddling' through unpalatable civil-military tasks at the tactical level in the absence of specific strategic goals by either military or civilians under a coherent, unified command structure leads to wasted resources of national power.<sup>127</sup> The following extracts from the RAND study relate specifically to addressing operational art in interagency stability operations and optimizing integration of instruments of national power from an interagency and whole of government perspective:

1. **Success Is Possible, Answers Exist.** To begin with, we make three critical observations about implementing what we believe to be necessary reforms if the United States and, where appropriate, friends and allies are to succeed in the radically new environment that we are considering in this report. First, almost all of what we suggest depends on the willingness of individuals and institutions to *recognize* that there are serious problems that must be resolved and that cannot be simply ignored or dealt Discussion and Recommendations with by temporary work-arounds. We assert that, in many instances, *the means exist* for resolving these problems. Many of these means have been discovered through experimentation and are already available to others through proper attention to best practices and lessons learned. To a great extent, the ability to bring about change is a matter of attitude, cultural understanding, adaptability, leadership, and political will.

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<sup>126</sup> On ends-ways-means of strategy and campaigning: "Equally, each *individual campaign* needs to be examined in the wider strategic context to ensure that the ends-ways-means rationale for it internally is in accordance with the higher direction of national strategy and *is politically sustainable* through its planned duration. In this context, operations—as a sequence of tactical actions and tactics, actual battles, and engagements— clearly come under the category of means.(emphasis added)" Justin Kelly and Michael J. Brennan, 113.

<sup>127</sup> Amanda Smith, "Strategic Communication: Interagency Rhetoric And Consistent Interpretation," (Symposium Volume, U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 338, 366,373, 374, 380.

Where these qualities now exist, especially in a number of the theater and field situations we reviewed, success is clearly possible (and indeed, likely) if some relatively simple steps are taken.

2. **National Security Has Changed.** This definition is changing, however, and not just in the sense that military, political, and economic elements must all be involved in some mixture: This was, after all, the essence of the “combined arms” that brought success in the Cold War. Rather, the definition is changing in terms of the requirement that these three (and other) elements of national power and influence be brought together, in the same theater, at the same time, and in close coordination with one another, so that each can contribute to the success of the others and hence to the whole.
3. **Money and Other Resources.** Third, it is necessary at the outset to understand fully that what we are proposing will require that adequate funding, as well as other resources in adequate amounts, is available where and when it is needed. *This point is a critical, indeed indispensable, theme of this report.* This means not just “enough” money to do the job—essential in itself. It also means the right institutions and individuals are given the money they need, when they need it, to complete their missions
  - the creation of a capacity to move money (and resources) flexibly from task to task—and also from one element of an operation to another—preferably with decisions taken on the spot to the extent feasible.
  - willingness to be responsive on the part of home institutions (e.g., different departments of the U.S. government), the administration overall (including the Office of Management and Budget), and the U.S. Congress.

Just stating this general observation may seem to many seasoned observers to be heresy or to fall in the realm of “no can do.” However, *it is the opinion of the panel of senior practitioners that, without a major change in attitude and practice regarding the raising, distribution, allocation, and spending of money and related resources on U.S. national security, critical tasks now facing us as a nation will be unachievable.* It is that important and that simple.<sup>128</sup>

In addition to these broad proposals, pre-conditions for operational art execution using stability mechanisms emerge in the RAND study:<sup>129</sup>

1. **The National Security Council Must Lead in Planning.** “. . .To ensure that organizational planning and resource planning proceed in lockstep, the NSC and OMB should have a joint cell for considering these issues. Of course, the full set of resources needed for undertaking the planning effort strictly at the NSC level does not now exist (nor should an effort of the necessary magnitude be physically lodged there). But the central direction, the setting of overall parameters, the interagency reconciliation process, the allocation of resources (with OMB engagement), and the systematic and continuing review of results very much belong at this level. . .”<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Hunter, 10-11.

<sup>129</sup> FM 3-0, *Operations*, 6-10, 6-11.

<sup>130</sup> Hunter, 16-17.

2. **Career-Long Cross-Discipline, Cross-Agency Education.** Education in national security affairs needs to reflect the new demands of civil-military cooperation and the full range of tasks and requirements that this could entail.<sup>131</sup>
3. **Standing Planning Process.** “Furthermore, every operation does, to a significant degree, need to be planned *de novo*, as reflecting the necessarily unique circumstances of every preconflict, conflict, and postconflict engagement. But there can and should be a capacity, deriving authority from the NSC, for a *standing planning process*... Further, such a standing planning process will foster relationships among all personnel likely to become engaged in carrying out cross-agency and cross-discipline deployments, relationships that will stand them in good stead when they are called upon to carry out their responsibilities. This integration should not be looked upon as the imposition of a straitjacket on any component or a diminution of the ability of different agencies to accomplish their particular missions; rather, it is to encourage a change in the way of thinking so that “interagency” becomes a habit of mind rather than just a bureaucratic term.”<sup>132</sup>
4. **USAID’s Special Requirements.** “Effective use of civilian resources in the field requires expanding USAID’s capacity to manage its funds. At present, USAID staff design a program, hire a partner organization (NGO or contractor) to implement the program, and provide fiscal and programmatic oversight of the partner until its completion. In Iraq and Afghanistan, USAID’s program budgets are significant, yet staffing levels have not increased, resulting in USAID’s hiring partners to manage multiple subcontracts or subgrants that USAID would normally manage directly. The outsourcing of program management authority means that USAID officers at the provincial level have virtually no influence over programs operating in their area. . Further, USAID is an implementation agency for development activities, but in Iraq and Afghanistan, it must take on major responsibilities for strategic thinking and crisis response. The senior staff must be able to assess a program’s strategic as well as its technical impact on U.S. policy in the country. It must understand the implications of funding decisions on the conflict or crisis. If USAID is to succeed, its senior staff must be trained to think beyond implementation.”<sup>133</sup>

A more holistic definition of operational art during stability operations warrants the premise of interagency unity of command in an interactive relationship with national policymakers for civil-military tactical task application. The NSC role of general policy action must directly translate missions, responsibilities, and resourcing parameters during stability

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<sup>131</sup> Hunter, 20; Joseph J. Collins, “The Perils Of Planning: Lessons From Afghanistan And Iraq,” (Symposium Volume, U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 108-109.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>133</sup> Hunter, 30-31.

operations to a greater degree than ‘steady-state’ bi-lateral country policy activity.<sup>134</sup> State, Defense, and USAID all have roles, but in ongoing or post-conflict nations, a comprehensive strategy that expends billions of dollars must have unity of command from the executive, NSC to the COCOM and subordinate NRT or similar entity. All developmental, reconstruction, and stabilization should have unity of purpose and nesting with national policy. The RAND report points to multiple levels of guidance concerning interagency cooperation; combined with the existing realities of the (strategically intentioned, yet operationally-tactically focused) U.S. JCP, USAID position on development expenditures, and the innumerable tactical level reconstruction/development operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, unity of effort, let alone command, does not reflect optimal implementation of strategic policy operationally or tactically.

## **Recommendations:**

These recommendations reflect the synthesis of past U.S. stability/reconstruction endeavors that provided positive frameworks or models to emulate, combined with refined versions of problematic enterprises in the present conflicts of OIF/OEF:

1. Develop PRT Doctrine. Currently, the Foreign Service Institute trains prospective PRT members in best practices.<sup>135</sup> This doctrine, whether instructed to civilian or military audiences is immaterial in the abstract, however, the military instruction is essential, since the primary agents on the ground are invariably military in current and future contingencies. Vacuums in civil-related capacities created by the lack of civilian

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<sup>134</sup> Hunter, 16; Vouno, 16-17.

<sup>135</sup> Lawrence Butler, “In Response: More Than Pins On A Map,” *Foreign Service Journal*, (May 2007): 17.

- participation, whether eventually legislated to exist or forged in an ad-hoc fashion still require persistent interagency functions, regardless of who executes the function.<sup>136</sup>
2. Combine NGOs and Private Contractor single set of rules recommendation, specifically to address policy issues that sub-contractors of NGOs (primarily USAID) are in line with civil-military operational objectives. NSC oversight of strategic goals for development should set the priorities and budgeting for complex contingency operation development programs. Ensure specific strategic policy goals connectivity to operational or tactical engagements and actions with funding for programmatic or technical skill set training.<sup>137</sup>
  3. Institute a national level ‘CORDS’ or national Reconstruction Team (NRT) element to perform central clearinghouse role for policy review, integration of funding streams and interagency teams at provincial and below. Similar to the role that Ambassador Komer assumed in MACV, the leadership required at the theater level NRT would require appropriate rank, filled by either military or civilian in the deputy commander role with access to the military staff and leader of the national level team or cell staff structure.
- Similar arrangements, down to the lowest practicable level, would include rating responsibilities to strengthen unity of effort and command requirements. Operational

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<sup>136</sup> Hunter, 35; “Current U.S. doctrine creates a gap between politics and war, whereas “good” doctrine should acknowledge *both* the need to fully engage political leadership and the national bureaucracy in campaign planning *and* the challenges of doing so. Good doctrine does not guarantee success but at least offers a promising start.” Justin Kelly and Michael J. Brennan, 115.

<sup>137</sup> Hunter, 36-38. On Private Contractor Recommendations: “**Factor In Potential Contractor Roles.** In advance of an operation, as part of both military and nonmilitary requirements, the potential roles and missions of private contractors should be taken into account to the degree that these requirements can be foreseen. Planning should include their roles, and representatives of this sector should be called upon for advice and counsel in this process. **Create Relationships in Advance and Set Standards.** A cadre of planners for private sector involvement should be created on a permanent basis, with U.S. government interagency liaison to appropriate professional groups. *The U.S. should create a single set of rules, regulations, and standards* for contracts with nongovernmental entities and individuals that will be uniform across U.S. government agencies, as a matter of both efficiency and integrity.” (Emphasis added), Ibid., 38. Author’s note: As sub-contractors of USAID take on NGO-like status, the autonomous nature of the contracting process and USAID civilian-military policy challenges integration of stability operations focused on common goals. Combining a single set of rules for separate contractors should include the sub-contractor entities of USAID as part of this group, and not a separate entity during DOD operations in theater.

- level integration of elements of interagency power and strategic feedback/policy formation will occur in the NRT, as nested with, and informing the NSC.<sup>138</sup>
4. Expand operational art instruction at services schools to include interagency program and policy implementation, to include required feedback mechanism through operational command levels for strategic policy guidance, clarification, or adjustment. The general understanding of operational art is the sequencing of tactical engagements in support of strategic guidance in generally military terms. Broaden the military aspects of operational art to include interagency capabilities as integral for future commanders, advisors, and other implementers in a strategic context. Human and political elements will always be paramount in war; by only including strictly military considerations in operational art, leaders risk “cutting the foot to fit the shoe.” Both the Army Field Manual 3-0 and Joint Publication 3-0 agree on operational art integrating ends, ways, and means across the levels of war, and that support of imbedded stability mechanisms requires coordination and cooperation with civilian agencies.<sup>139</sup> The operational level of war is distinct from practicing operational art, which provides for the strategic to tactical discourse in determining policy course corrections or termination criteria.<sup>140</sup>
  5. Maintain both PRT and EPRT or sub-provincial interagency structure to advise, monitor, and administer foreign aid and technical/governmental assistance. Realign current USAID development framework for process oriented, US strategic based funding vs. sub-contractor program oriented funding structure, as determined by discrete NRT strategic policy guidance. Complex contingency or stability operation declaration by the NSC would enact the NRT framework and full partnership with DOD in theater.

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 34; Long, 59,60.

<sup>139</sup> Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, 6-11.

<sup>140</sup> Justin Kelly and Michael J. Brennan, 113-116.



6. Build interagency doctrinal framework on Joint doctrine construct when considering operational art as inclusive of inter-departmental and interagency activity. The NSC, like the Joint Chiefs, should act as the arbiter in the feedback process and doctrinal oversight required between tactical implementers and strategic stakeholders. Although the members of the NSC are not departmental chiefs, the interagency doctrine would streamline the roles and responsibilities for action by the President through the NSC. The operational commander under the NSC-NRT framework, during stability operations, would execute sequential or simultaneous integrated interagency actions under a unified doctrine and command structure. The expansion of doctrinal instruction encompassing political policy engagement across civilian and military audiences in operational art precepts is vital. A still-relevant critique of the term “Operational Art” by the U.S. military in recent decades by two Australian Defense experts referring to FM 100-5 (now FM 3-0) state:

There is nothing wrong with ascribing new meanings to existing terms and therefore the FM 100–5 definition is not necessarily wrong. However, in this case it has the pernicious effect of perverting the original purpose of operational art—facilitating the two-way conversation between tactics and strategy—and instead, in association with a discrete and influential level of command, actually works to weaken this connection. The misunderstanding of the role of operational art proselytized in FM 100–5 and the creation of the notion of an “operational level of war” has led it to assume a level of independence that has usurped the role of strategy and thereby resisted the role that *politics* should play in campaign planning. (Emphasis added)<sup>141</sup>

## Conclusions

Operational art and interagency elements and principles necessarily combine during stability operations. Stability operations, however, whether defined as SSTR, reconstruction, development or some combination thereof, occur in a variety of spatial and temporal phases of conflict. During counter-insurgency operations, as defined by the U.S. Army, “political, social, and economic programs are usually more valuable than conventional military operations in

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<sup>141</sup> Justin Kelly and Michael J. Brennan, 113.

addressing the root causes of the conflict.”<sup>142</sup> Operational art, as a necessary component of effective warfare, encompass interagency functions, similar to other military related tactical actions.<sup>143</sup>

Stability and reconstruction principles development since World War II through Vietnam displayed several common themes converging in a political-interagency-strategic nexus. Past embracing, manipulation, or discarding of this nexus cannot predict future usage, but only provide an element of understanding to harness the abstract elements. Ignoring the realities of that nexus in favor of purely military solutions on one end of the spectrum to only ‘cooperative’ interagency/inter-departmental relationships on the other end of the spectrum will result in less than optimal strategic policy realization, to include consuming U.S. blood and treasure for want of clear assessments and requisite strategic policy adjustments.

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<sup>142</sup> Department of the Army Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, D.C., 2006), 2-9.

<sup>143</sup> National Defense Strategy of the United States of America 2008, 17-18.

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